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THE EYE

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THE EYE

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THE INDEPENDENT

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Newspaper of the Year for photographs

Aitken's daughter arrested over libel trial plot

By Kim Sengupta and Ian Burrell

IN A sensational development in the Jonathan Aitken affair, the former Tory minister's 17-year-old daughter was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

Victoria Aitken was taken by her aunt from her father's home near the House of Commons to a central London police station where she was questioned in connection with his collapsed libel action.

Officers from the Metropolitan Police also arrested Said Ayas, 56, the Saudi millionaire, said to have paid Mr Aitken's bill at the Paris Ritz hotel in September 1993, an arrangement which proved to be the former minister's downfall.

Mr Ayas was then the business manager of Prince Mohammed bin Fahd, the son

of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. Last night a member of the Aitken family disclosed to *The Independent* that they believed Mr Aitken's wife Lolita would also have been arrested yesterday, had she not been out of the country.

Mr Aitken's wife and daughter had both been due to give evidence in his libel action against *The Guardian*. They were due to support his claim that Mrs Aitken had paid the Ritz bill. Mr Ayas had provided Mr Aitken with a signed statement saying he had not paid the former minister's bill.

Mr Aitken had always claimed that his own version of events was based on what he had been told by his wife and daughter. After studying written witness statements signed by the women, police officers travelled to Paris and Switzerland to examine the evidence.

The family member, who asked not to be identified, said: "We were expecting something like this [the arrest of Victoria Aitken] - it is all to do with the stay in Paris. She is not particularly upset about this, although it is not a pleasant experience for a young girl to go through. This has been hanging over the family for such a long time. It has got to be resolved."

Ms Aitken, who is studying for A-levels at a sixth-form college in Oxford, returned to the



Victoria Aitken (right) with her aunt, Maria Aitken, yesterday. Photograph: Michael Crabtree



Said Ayas. Also arrested

family home nearly four hours after leaving for the police station and was met by a crowd of photographers and reporters.

In a brief statement, Scotland Yard said: "A 17-year-old girl was interviewed at a London police station today at a previously arranged meeting. She was subsequently arrested on suspicion of conspiring to pervert the course of justice."

The arrests provided the latest twist in Mr Aitken's disastrous attempt to refute the allegations that he allowed Mr Ayas to pay his Ritz bill.

The minister's battle to clear his name using what he memorably described as "the simple sword of truth and the trusty shield of fair play" led to his humiliation as the case collapsed last June. He was forced to drop the action when lawyers acting for *The Guardian* and Granada Television produced evidence that Mrs Aitken had been in

Switzerland at the time she was supposed to have paid the bill.

The libel action, which began in 1995, was expected to lead to Mr Aitken's financial ruin but he was recently appointed to a position with defence giant GEC-Marconi.

Mr Aitken resigned as Chief Secretary to the Treasury in April 1995 to fight the libel action. He lost his seat at South Thanet, Kent, which he had represented since 1974, at the last election.

cover Information Research Department tried to win hearts and minds with a work which had proved "a most effective propaganda weapon" in the West.

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Murder case man tortured to death by Maze loyalists

By David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

DAVID Keys, the loyalist found hanging in the Maze, supposedly the UK's most secure penal institution, had been tortured and died a slow death.

The authorities believe he most probably died of strangulation before his loyalist associates strung him up and left him hanging in his cell. But first they spent time beating and severely abusing him with various home-made weapons, causing horrible injuries, before slashing his wrists.

He was found hanging in the prison on Sunday morning. He did not know it, but he was a dead man from the time he had been escorted into the Loyalist Volunteer Force wing a few days earlier. Last night an LVF prisoner at the Maze was arrested in connection with the death.

Damien Trainor, the friends shot dead in an LVF gun attack in a bar in the quiet Co Armagh village of Poyntzpass earlier this month. The killings received widespread publicity, principally because the two men killed, a Protestant and a Catholic, had had a lifelong friendship which transcended the sectarian divide.

Keys was no angel, being involved in both paramilitary activity and drug-trafficking. In common with quite a few involved in the drugs trade, he did business with both loyalists and republicans. This activity almost got him killed in November last, when he was shot as he sat in a car in east Belfast and was badly injured. A loyalist group was responsible.

But he survived and, if the security forces are correct, he drove the car used in the shooting of Philip Allen and Damien Trainor. Keys appeared in court on Wednesday, a detective telling the court that when charged he had replied: "Definitely not guilty, definitely not guilty to any of them murders."

During the court appearance, according to one observer, "looked a bundle of nerves".

It seems that Keys, while under police interrogation, had given information to detectives. He must have known that this put him at risk from his LVF associates, but apparently believed they would either not know of this or would forgive him for it.

THE BUDGET GORDON OPENS THE BOX

Read the Budget '98 20-page section in tomorrow's *Independent* for all the details

Unrivalled coverage of all the news, analysis and more from our team of writers, including Andrew Marr, David Aaronovitch, and Hamish McRae



Sex claim 'mystifies' Clinton

By James Roberts

PRESIDENT CLINTON yesterday did his best to put as much distance as possible between himself and the woman who is possibly the most credible witness yet to testify about his sexual behaviour.

Kathleen Willey, 51, told on television on Sunday how, in November 1993, outside the Oval Office, Mr Clinton kissed her, touched her breast and put her hand on his genitals, as she asked him for a job.

Yesterday, speaking at a Maryland high school, Mr Clinton said he was "mystified and disappointed by this turn of events". Commenting on the alleged sexual encounter last summer, Mr Clinton said through his lawyer that he may have been trying to console Mrs Willey, whose family faced financial ruin. In his recent deposition in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case he said he may have kissed Mrs Willey on the forehead because she was so distressed.

Mrs Willey was an early supporter of Mr Clinton with no apparent political axe to grind, and was originally reluctant to

come forward. It may make her a more credible witness than others who have accused the President of sexual harassment.

In 1992, Mrs Willey and her husband eagerly supported the Clinton-Gore ticket. She spent election night 1992 in Little Rock celebrating Mr Clinton's victory. A few weeks later, she began working as an unpaid volunteer in the White House social office.

The Senate Majority leader Trent Lott said Mrs Willey appeared believable in her televised statements.

Clinton defence, page 10

Four legs good in the Cold War

By John Crossland

THE FOREIGN Office tried to use a cartoon version of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* to counter the spread of post-war communism in British colonies in the Middle East and the Far East, according to documents released yesterday.

In 1950, as the Cold War began to take hold, the authorities grew increasingly concerned that Russia and China were trying to extend their influence in colonies such as Singapore, what was then Malaya and Egypt. So Christopher Mayhew's under-

cover Information Research Department tried to win hearts and minds with a work which had proved "a most effective propaganda weapon" in the West.

Cartoonist Norman Pett and scriptwriter Don Freeman were called in to create the cartoons, but soon ran up against the Foreign Office's lack of flexibility. Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Sheridan insisted on a "regular drill" to ensure prompt delivery of the cartoon at his secret headquarters. "I have already begun sending out the strips to my various clients and you will appreciate the importance of being regular."

As the secret files from the Public Record office reveals, the cartoonists also ran into problems with their designs for the farmyard animals. Sheridan complained that Boxer "the faithful, steady, plodding cart horse... looks too pansy. He looks almost as effeminate as Pretty Polly herself."

The cartoon was not successful. Baffled by the lack of interest in Egypt, the IRD cabled the Cairo embassy, saying: "We suggest that a local artist convert oak trees into palms and substitute feathers for bowler hats and turn skirts in sarongs."

Computer buffs forge ahead for an easy buck

By David Usborne
In New York

THE AMERICAN dollar has a new enemy. It lurks in homes all across the land and is multiplying steadily. It is the personal computer, alias PC. Or rather the computer and its co-conspirator, the ink-jet printer.

To the dismay of the US Treasury, increasing numbers of citizens are making a common discovery: that even inexpensive home PCs can be used to turn

out more or less convincing counterfeit money.

Images of the banknotes, whether in \$100 denominations or lower, are freely available on the Internet. Any computer-savvy person can download them and print them. An alternative is to scan in a real banknote.

So easy, a child could do it? Certainly. Among the hundreds of cases of computer-forging turning up across the country, many involve school pupils

found to have printed out just a few, sometimes simply for a dare.

Matthew Hagens, 16, of Long Island, New York, was arrested last month, for instance, for passing a fake \$10 note to buy bubble gum. He found the images from an Internet chat room, police said.

Robert Rubin, US Treasury Secretary, wants longer sentences to be available in forgery cases. His department calculates that while computer-

created notes represented about 1 per cent of counterfeit money in circulation in the US three years ago, the proportion has grown to 4.3 per cent, and is rising.

Writing to a government commission that sets sentences, Mr Rubin said: "Traditional law-enforcement methods, as well as the sentencing guidelines, must be adapted to meet the challenges created by this ever-changing technology."

The computer-forgers are

difficult for police to discover and then effectively to charge. While it is hard to explain away an off-set printer and gallons of green ink, the modern forger has nothing more incriminating than a PC and printer. There may just be a floppy disc with images of banknotes on it, but only if investigators are lucky.

The notes will usually fool a shopkeeper but will generally be spotted as a fake by any bank. The Treasury is to launch a

nationwide campaign to educate people, shopkeepers especially, on how to spot cyber-money.

One tip: be suspicious if the ink smudges or if the paper feels wrong. The Treasury does not print its money on paper bought from the local stationers.



5 facts about...

1. The first cartoon was published in 1950.
2. The cartoon was published in the *Independent*.
3. The cartoon was published in the *Independent*.
4. The cartoon was published in the *Independent*.
5. The cartoon was published in the *Independent*.

NEWS
weeknights at 7pm on 5

PEOPLE LIKE NEWS

Radio 4 defies sceptics as new schedule claims high ground

By Rob Brown
Media Editor

ANY fears that BBC Radio 4 is to be dumbed down were laid to rest yesterday when its new controller, James Boyle, ended months of speculation by unveiling a new schedule which is indisputably highbrow.

Extra episodes of *The Archers* and *Woman's Hour* will be backed by more drama, more current affairs, more books programmes and more comedy in a programming line-up which Mr Boyle described as positively Reithian.

To reinforce the point that there has been no abandonment of traditional standards at the mainly speech-based service, many of Radio 4's most high-profile presenters – including Melvyn Bragg from *Start the Week*, James Naughtie from *Today*, Jenni Murray of *Woman's Hour* and Ned Sherrin – were present at the launch at Broadcasting House.

They will soon be joined by John Peel, Kate Adie, Michael Buerk and Martin Bashir (who interviewed Diana, Princess of Wales for *Panorama*), who have been given prominent roles in the new line-up.

The only people noticeably unhappy yesterday were members of the Becca broadcasting union, angry about job cuts. Seventy posts are to go in topical features and 30 will be axed in Manchester and Bristol.

But Mr Boyle did not let the union's veiled threat of industrial action mar his carefully rehearsed unveiling of the new schedule to a packed press conference. "It's the richest schedule ever," he proudly proclaimed as a slick audiovisual presentation listed the changes.

As expected, a number of long-running strands are being axed, including *Face the Facts*, *Afternoon Shift*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Mediumwave* and *Sport on 4*. Religious listeners will have to get up at 5.45am to hear the *Morning Prayer*. The *Morning Service* will also start earlier on Sundays. Moral dilemmas will be explored by Michael Buerk

in a new interview programme called *The Choice*. Jonathan Dimbleby will grill a major public figure for an imaginary new challenge in *The Candidate*. Kate Adie will become the first permanent presenter of *From Our Own Correspondent*.

There will be several family orientated new strands, including *Home Truths*, which will be presented by John Peel, who made his name as an alternative music DJ on Radio 1.

The network's flagship *Today* news programme is being stretched to three hours and there were assurances that its content will not become "more fluffy", as some papers had speculated. However, its content will be adapted in an attempt to hook occasional listeners.

Steve Mitchell, deputy head of news programmes, said: "Some people don't use us as much as they should. They believe in news terms we are a rather staid and stuffy perception."

That is still a perception of Radio 4 in general, its controller conceded yesterday. Mr Boyle said the network's po-faced and pro-establishment reputation worried him "more than the Rajar figures", a reference to the quarterly audits of listening figures which show that Radio 4's audience is predominantly old and dwindling.

"We need to persuade more people that Radio 4 is worth listening to," Mr Boyle said. "But I've got to maintain the intelligence and variety of programmes, otherwise it won't be Radio 4." He described the new schedule as Reithian, a reference to the BBC's founding supremo, a fellow Scot who committed the corporation to a triple mission to inform, educate and entertain.

"It's the views of the listener which have shaped the new schedule and it's the best ever," Mr Boyle said, confidently forecasting that the changes would "reinforce Radio 4's position as the home of quality, intelligent and engrossing speech radio – the richest speech network in the world."



BBC stars at Broadcasting House yesterday. Clockwise from left: Kate Adie, Tommy Pearson, Lars Tharp, James Naughtie, John Waite, Trevor Harrison, Donald Sinden, Niamh Cusack, John Humphrys. Photograph: Andrew Burman

Smith warns BBC over lottery show

THE BBC got a stern warning from the Government yesterday about its involvement in a new lottery scratchcard game which has been widely condemned as "the biggest gambling show in history", writes Rob Brown.

In response to an emergency motion in the House of Commons, Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, told the chairman and governors of the corporation to make sure plans for the controversial programme do not breach its own charter.

The public broadcasting service had earlier been accused by Gerald Kaufman, chairman of the Select Committee on Culture, of violating its own guidelines and contravening "its very basis of existence" by promoting the game entitled *TV Dreams*.

Conservative Culture spokesman Francis Maude said the BBC had shown "how far beyond the limits of the charter the programme is" through its own "eleventh hour" decision to withdraw its name from promotional material for the programme. Television com-

mercials and billboards now make no mention of the new show. But it remains the case that the contestants must purchase a scratchcard.

The BBC's producer guidelines warn against competitions which "risk being interpreted as gambling or a lottery". They state that the Lotteries and Amusements Act of 1976 may be contravened if "a viewer competition is based on a game of chance and some sort of donation, purchase or contribution is made".

Although the BBC has stated that it will comply with

the terms of these guidelines, church organisations have joined politicians in condemning the BBC's *National Lottery Big Ticket Show*, which will be launched on 28 March.

Mr Smith said yesterday that he was "not exonerating" the BBC and added: "I will personally expect the chairman and governors of the BBC to examine very carefully the provisions of their charter and agreement, which they are there to uphold, to ensure that the plans for this programme do not breach in any way these provisions."

Dr Spock, who threw out the childcare rule book, dies at 94

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor



Benjamin Spock: Midwife to the flower children

ALL YOU need is kindness, said Dr Benjamin Spock. The childcare expert who played midwife to the flower children of the Sixties died quietly on Sunday, aged 94, at his home in California, having helped a generation of post-war parents dump the rigid strictures on child rearing they had been told to follow and learn how to relax.

Despite his huge success as an author – his books sold 50 million copies around the world – he died burdened by debt. Recently his wife, Mary Morgan, appealed for help to pay his medical bills which were running at \$125,000 (£78,000) a year.

The six-foot-four-inch former psychiatrist, who once confessed he never kissed his own sons, told parents not to be overawed by experts and not to listen to everything the neighbours said. His approach was based on putting parents at the centre of child rearing. "Trust yourself. You know more than you think you do," was his message.

It was eagerly received. Advice manuals of the time gave instructions about when to pick up the baby (or more often when not to), when to put down, when to feed and how to discipline. Dr Spock urged parents to follow their instincts. "We know for a fact that the natural loving care that kindly parents give their children is a hundred times more valuable," he said.

His first book, *Commonsense about Babies and Children*, published in 1946, and those that followed were translated into 30 languages. His success was so great that he was accused of being the father of permissiveness and of having produced a "Spock-marked generation of hippies".

The childbirth campaigner and author Sheila Kitzinger said yesterday: "He was a rad-

ical. He learnt from mothers by watching what they really did. He told them to trust their own feelings. No one had ever said that to mothers before."

Later, Dr Spock joined the generation he was accused of producing in protests against the Vietnam war and nuclear power. He ran for president in 1972 as a candidate of the People's Party, but polled less than 1 per cent of the votes. In his mid-seventies, he started psychoanalysis, an emotionally demanding process normally confined to the under-forties, demonstrating his appetite for self-renewal.

Although he was later accused of having recanted and taken a more moralistic tone, there is little evidence for it. "Nothing I have read suggested he wanted to expose children to strict discipline," Ms Kitzinger said.

He himself was clear about his views. "I may as well let the cat out of the bag right away as far as my opinion goes and say that strictness or permissiveness is not the real issue. Good-hearted parents who aren't afraid to be firm when it is necessary can get good results with either moderate strictness or moderate permissiveness. On the other hand, a strictness that comes from harsh feelings or a permissiveness that is timid or vacillating can each lead to poor results."

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Aisle be damned – Sarah's sticking close to her man

IN THE NEWS

SARAH MACAULAY

FOR more than a year, gossip columnists have been confidently predicting that Gordon Brown and his girlfriend, Sarah Macaulay, are "soon to marry". But when the Chancellor holds his briefcase aloft for the television cameras in Downing Street this afternoon, Ms Macaulay will not be at his side writes Kathy Marks.

At 47, Mr Brown is not about to be bounced by public opinion into tying the knot, as he made clear in an interview with *The Independent* on Sunday at the weekend. But Ms Macaulay, according to friends, is equally adamant that if the couple do ever decide to get married, it will be for their own private reasons and at a time that suits them.

Friends believe that they are uncommonly well suited, temperamentally and ideologically – quite apart from being patently smitten with one another.

Ms Macaulay, 34, has impeccable New Labour credentials. The public relations consultancy that she runs with Julia Hobsbawm, daughter of Eric, the Marxist historian, was founded on the philosophy of "integrity PR" and has organised numerous fund-raising events for the Labour Party.

On a personal level, she is cast in a similar mould to the Chancellor. Both are serious-



Waiting game: Sarah Macaulay is happy to hang on for the right moment to marry. Photograph: Barry Bland

mined people. Where he is thought out, she is seen as aloof. Certainly, she is self-sufficient, reserved, even cool, although those close to her insist she is warm-hearted and "good fun" in private.

There is one other similarity. Like Mr Brown, Ms Macaulay is remarkably intelligent, a trait that has been ap-

parent since her early teens, according to teachers at Acland Burghley, the comprehensive she went to in north London.

Joe Kusner, who taught her art for four years, said yesterday: "You had the impression that she only needed to glance at something in order to learn it. She was particularly interested in the history of art, and

she was expounding her own theories at the age of 13 or 14. "There was one art history teacher who was quite intimidated by Sarah because she knew so much and would try to catch her out."

Ms Macaulay spent part of her childhood living in Tanzania. Later her parents split up and she lived with her mother and two younger brothers in north London, but spent summers with her Scottish father in Fife. She took A-levels at Camden Girls School, where she first met Ms Hobsbawm, and read psychology at Bristol University.

At the agency, which the two women set up five years ago, Ms Macaulay is managing director and runs much of the day-to-day business as well as her own projects. She likes classical music, American crime fiction, working out at the gym, and is a member of Soho House, the private club favoured by New Labour, where she has been seen dining with Mr Brown.

Ms Hobsbawm said: "Sarah is very passionate politically and morally. She's got a very strong work ethic and strong principles, but she's good company socially. She can be one of the girls."

She and the Chancellor have been "an item" for nearly three years and spend much of their spare time together, including weekends at his house in Scotland.

But apart from a couple of photo-calls, they conduct their relationship in privacy. As one friend said yesterday: "It's very close, it's very happy; that's all there is to it."

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Newcastle disunited as football soap takes seedy twist

By Simon Turnbull

THE sign above the main entrance to St James' Park stood large and bold. Yesterday, however, Newcastle was anything but united. Tyneside had once again been thrown into turmoil by its resident soap-opera: Newcastle United Football Club.

Tony Banks even made a guest appearance as the latest episode continued to unfold yesterday. "I'm looking for a very strong denial that the claims concerned are not true," the sports minister said, "but if they are true it's a very sad day for Newcastle."

The world beyond Tyneside might have thought it was sad when 20,000 locals crammed into the car park at the football ground just to see Alan Shearer stand on a balcony wearing the black and white strip of Newcastle United for the first time - or when life in Newcastle ground to a grief-stricken halt the day Kevin Keegan, the permed messiah who saved the club from extinction and led it to the promised land of the FA Carling Premiership, suddenly upped and left for pastures new.

Keegan and Shearer both feature in the new script of Tyneside's ongoing football farce, though the alleged description of the Geordie icons as - respectively - Shirley Temple and Mary Poppins was the least damaging of the less than neighbourly remarks attributed to Freddie Shepherd, Newcastle United's chairman, and Douglas Hall, the club's vice chairman, in a Sunday newspaper article.



RAWBERRY PLACE

Alleged boasts of a scoring spree in the brothels of Europe, of fleeing fans for £45 on each £50 replica shirt and deriding Tyneside women as "dogs" had Newcastle decidedly disunited yesterday.

It also had the Prime Minister, a confirmed supporter of Newcastle United, "very concerned", according to Sir Jeremy Beecham, a former leader of Newcastle City Council and a visitor to 10 Downing Street yesterday.

Nor was Mr Blair's sporting aide, Mr Banks, slow to express his concern about the article in the *News of the World*.

He said: "If what is claimed was actually said the views are disturbing and quite frankly will anger all

decent fans because there is the feeling around the country that some fans do get ripped off by some clubs in terms of replica kit.

"If these views as reported are true then quite frankly it will confirm some of the worst beliefs

that some football supporters have about the way they are treated."

Mr Shepherd and Mr Hall, however, were conspicuously silent and conspicuously absent from Newcastle yesterday. They were attending an emergency board

Mutiny in the ranks: Disgruntled Newcastle fans - the self-styled Toon Army - at the club's ground St James' Park yesterday as a board meeting was held at a secret location to discuss allegations that chairman Freddie Shepherd (right, top) and vice-chairman Douglas Hall (bottom) boasted about fleeing fans and claimed that North-east womenfolk were all 'dogs'.

Main photograph: Will Walker



meeting of the football club. The location was secret, but not the item on the top of the agenda.

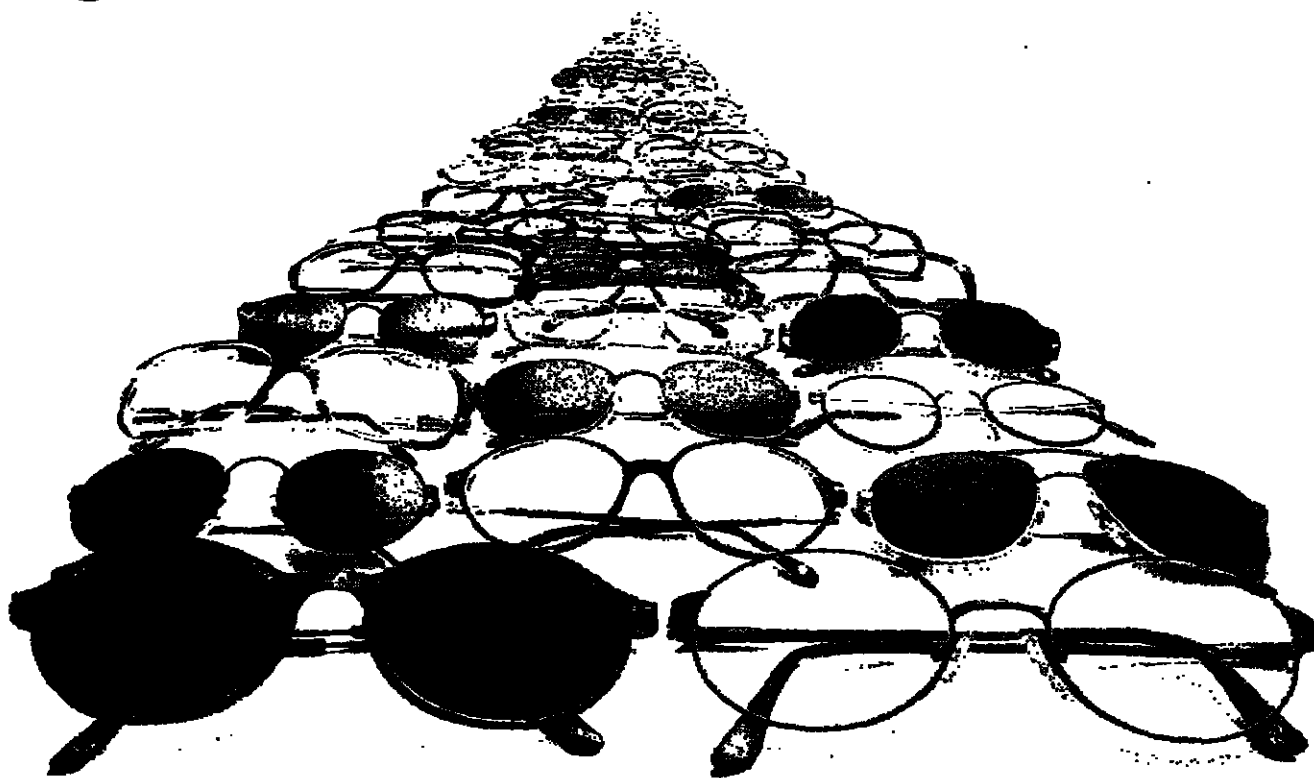
Newcastle United plc opened for trading on the stock market yesterday at 84p per share, 6p down. With more than £9m having been knocked off the club's valuation at the stroke of a Sunday newspaper pen, the question was whether the chairman and the vice-chairman would have to go.

Maybe not, the sound of silence emanating from St James' Park suggested. Yes, 90 per cent of callers to BBC Radio Newcastle's phone-in show poll insisted. Two said they would be sending back their season tickets in disgust; one called for Keegan's appointment as chairman. Surprisingly, only Julie from Dipton spoke up for Tyneside's slighted womenfolk. "How can they slag us off when they look as ugly as they do?" she demanded.

Away from the red-hot air waves, there was support for the allegedly errant sons of Tyneside. Mark Jensen, editor of *The Mag*, a fanzine devoted to Newcastle United, said: "I don't think they should resign and I don't think they will. Every football fan knows that replica shirts are a rip off. If Newcastle have been selling them to subsidise Alan Shearer it's fine by me."

Shearer, the England captain, is depicted on the front cover of *The Mag*'s latest edition as the *Angel of the North*, the huge steel sculpture erected in Gateshead last month. Yesterday he was keeping his thoughts - angelic or otherwise - to himself.

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OPTICIANS

Grant cuts no barrier to student excesses

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

WHEN it comes to drinking vast quantities of alcohol, agricultural students would get a first for effort, while those studying the arts and social sciences come top in the dope-smoking department, according to a survey of 10 universities.

A drugs conference will hear today that physics students are among the most likely to experiment with drugs other than cannabis, and future doctors, dentists and vets are some of the biggest consumers of LSD.

Analysis of a survey of 3,700 second-year university students provides a fascinating insight into the drinking, smoking and drug habits of the different college faculties.

Top of the drinking league are biological science students - mainly those studying agriculture - 23 per cent of whom exceed the "hazardous" level.

Students from all faculties exceeded the weekly "low risk" drinking limit of 10.5 pints a week for men and seven for women. Veterinary and medical students were the most moderate boozers. Binge drinking - more than five pints in one evening - was most commonplace among biological science students, which resulted in some of them missing lectures three times a month.

Professor Heather Ashton, of the Department of Psychiatry, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, one of the report's co-authors, said: "This tells us that students drink one hell of a lot. Despite complaining about not having any money, they certainly seem to have enough when it comes to alcohol."

Cannabis was the most popular illegal drug, with experiences ranging from 71 per cent in arts students to 42 per cent in veterinary science students.

On the question of the use of all drugs, faculties of art (71 per cent), social science (70 per cent), biological sciences (67 per cent) and physical sciences (64 per cent) were the highest.

After cannabis the most

popular drug was LSD, with about half of engineering, law, mathematics, accountancy, medicine and dentistry students having tried it. Amphetamine, or "speed" was used by social scientists and art students.

Professor Ashton said: "This was popular at exam time as it helped students stay awake revising all night."

Surprisingly, researchers found little evidence that students became stressed by the amount of their drug taking and drinking, or by the debts they ran up paying for these activities. Their love lives and examination pressures were the most stressful aspects of university. The students who were least stressed were those

Cannabis use among second-year students, more than once per week, %	
Arts	27.8
Social Science	25.9
Biological Science	21.8
Physical Science	21.2
Engineering	16.2
Law/Accountancy	15.1
Maths	12.1
Medicine	11.1
Vet. Sci.	8.8

with high alcohol consumption and who played a lot of sports - which may explain the relaxed demeanour of university rugby club members.

The report also noted that most students had developed their drug and drinking habits before going to university. "The choice of degree course by a student may be influenced by his/her personal characteristics which also affect the type of lifestyle pursued," it said.

Smoking tobacco was greatest in biological science, arts, and social science students, of which about a third regularly had a cigarette.

Analysis of the survey's findings, which was completed last year, but has not been published in a national newspaper before, will be discussed at a conference today at the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals in London. The event is part of the London Study Safety Campaign organised by London Drug Action Teams.

A check on passports

TRAVELLERS leaving the United Kingdom will no longer have their passports checked, a Home Office minister announced yesterday.

Mike O'Brien said that the checks, which cost £3m per year, were "an expensive fiction". They would be replaced by improved closed-circuit television and by targeted, intelligence-led operations designed to catch criminals and child-abductors.

Mr O'Brien also disclosed yesterday that under a 1991 rule change asylum-seekers who had waited seven years for a decision were automatically considered for *Exceptional Leave to remain* here. However, he denied reports that there were plans for an amnesty of all 75,000 backlogged cases.

Alarm success for prostitute

ONE OF the personal alarms issued by police to Glasgow prostitutes has saved a 21-year-old woman from possible attack, it emerged yesterday.

A prostitute in the city's red-light district became the first to use the alarm after a man started threatening her, said police, who detained a man over the incident. The police added that the incident showed the value of the devices issued two weeks ago by detectives investigating the murder of Glasgow prostitute Margo Lafferty, 27.

Rail misery

COMPLAINTS from passengers on privatised train services have soared to record levels, it was revealed yesterday.

Many passengers still face "totally unacceptable levels of disruption to their daily journeys", said the London Regional Passengers Committee.

The committee, which covers 19 of the 25 train companies, received a 20.5 per cent rise in complaints about main line and London Underground services in the last three months of 1997.

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Straw to meet Lawrence parents after racial questions halt inquiry

By Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

THE inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence was dramatically halted yesterday after suggestions that the chairman of the hearing had shown that he was insensitive to race issues.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, will meet the black teenager's parents, Neville and Dorcen, today to discuss their concerns about criticisms contained in a newspaper report which outlined a number of cases in which Sir William Macpherson, the retired judge, was supposed to have been racially insensitive.

The move came on the first day of the inquiry in London which is expected to last up to three months and is seen as one of the most important

at last year's inquest into Stephen's murder at which Dorcen Lawrence had claimed the whole justice system, from the initial investigation to the Old Bailey trial of three men, "had let them down".

"They felt there were serious deficiencies at all stages," Mr Mansfield said.

"It is against this background that they wish to take this unusual step," he added.

Stephen, an 18-year-old A-level student, was stabbed to death in April 1993 waiting for a bus in Eltham, south-east London, by a gang of white youths.

On Friday, the Police Complaints Authority revealed it had recommended that a senior serving police officer involved in the case should face a disciplinary charge of neglect of duty. Nobody has been convicted of the murder despite a criminal trial and a private prosecution.

Among the incidents cited against Sir William was that a study of judicial reviews in immigration cases by 15 different judges in 1987 found that he had the highest rate of refusal. It was cited that in another case cited he ruled that a white parent could withdraw a child from a class with a large number of Asian children.

Sir William said the article had not checked its facts.

"I mention it only to dismiss the personal allegations with contempt," he said.

He said the article referred to cases he had handled "eight, nine, 10" years ago.

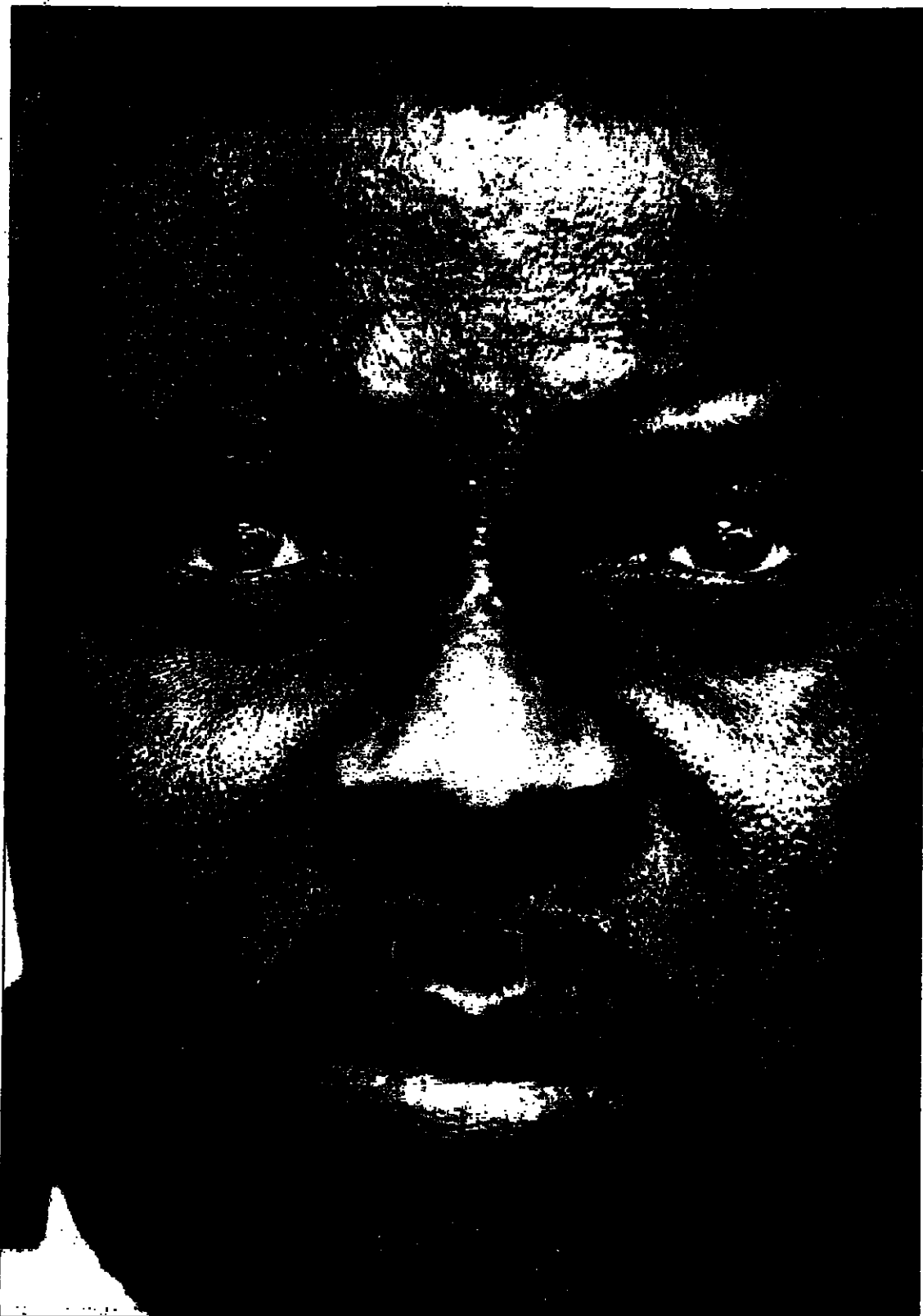
Sir William said he was concerned about claims about the inquiry itself, "namely the suggestion that I have denied access to documents to one party or the other."

"This is wholly untrue. That is a reflection not only on myself, but on my advisers and staff. I resent and deny the allegation."

Sir William has written to the editor of the *Observer* "expressing dissatisfaction" with the article.

After granting Mr Mansfield's application for an adjournment so the Lawrence family can meet the Home Secretary, Sir William said: "In view of the fact that my own position is to be discussed it is wise and sensible I should say no more."

A spokeswoman for the *Observer* said today: "We give careful consideration to all complaints and will comment further in due course."



Concern: Stephen's father, Neville Lawrence, is to meet Home Secretary Jack Straw Photograph: Reuters



Stephen Lawrence (right) and Sir William Macpherson Photograph: Reuters

race investigations carried out since the Scarman inquiry into the Brixton riots in 1981.

Sir William yesterday attacked the article in the *Observer* newspaper, which he dismissed "with contempt" and later disclosed he was considering legal action.

The inquiry was postponed until next Tuesday.

Mr Straw said yesterday: "The Lord Chancellor and I have complete confidence in Sir William's ability to conduct this inquiry with fairness and sensitivity," he said.

Michael Mansfield QC, counsel for Stephen's parents, told the hearing his clients had "very legitimate concerns about the inquiry and these concerns they wish to discuss with the Home Secretary prior to any inquiry actually beginning".

He referred to a statement made



Think-tanks roll into battle

What is the Smith Institute? "We don't know anything about it at all. I've never heard of it," said a member of the Policy Unit at Labour's Millbank headquarters. Nor had Professor Ananya Sen, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, heard of it when he was invited to lead one of a series of policy sessions sponsored by the institute to be held at No 11 Downing Street. Any suggestion that this is an aspiring alternative think-tank to the No 10 Policy Unit next door, led by Geoff Mulgan of Demos fame, is strictly Pandora's.

Another 70s taste crime

Pandora has received an irresistible invitation for this Thursday. Vogue night club on Wardour Street is offering something called "70s line dancing". Line dancing, right, is sometimes called "waltzing for manure kickers" as it is performed by cowboys and cowgirls to their favourite C&W songs. When Pandora asked a club organiser what was particularly noteworthy about "70s" line dancing as opposed to, say, line dancing in 1986 or 1997, no cogent answer was forthcoming.



Murdoch's new friend?

Robert Murdoch, the well-known Sinophile, was in London recently. As is his custom, he spent a considerable amount of his time visiting Wapping. But far less customary was the breakfast he held with the Leader of the Opposition. According to one predictably objective Tory source, Murdoch found the Boy Wonder "very impressive". Was it the way he ate up all his Cocoa Pops?

Cuddly toy ... pork bellies

First *Newsweek* turned us into a bestselling cover story with "Cool Britain". Now another American magazine is seeking to increase its circulation on the back of Blighty. A recent issue of *BusinessWeek* leads with "The City of London - Why It's The Center of Global Finance". The cover picture features a London trader in his colourful jacket bearing the obligatory photo ID badge. Closer inspection, however, reveals that the badge photograph is not of the jolly trader but none other than comedian Bruce Forsyth. What a marvellous tribute, Bruce, to your 50 years in showbiz.

Pandora

Doctors warn of injuries from acupuncture

By Jeremy Lawrence
Health Editor

ACUPUNCTURE, the alternative therapy chosen because it is natural and holistic, is not as safe as people think, researchers say.

Serious complications have occurred in at least 300 cases in the last 30 years, according to a worldwide review of research. Experts say the true scale of the problem is likely to be much greater because of "huge" under-reporting.

Injuries have been caused as a result of inadequate understanding of anatomy by the acupuncturist combined with "aggressive needling". The commonest serious injury is pneumothorax - piercing of the chest cavity causing the lung to collapse. Other injuries include damage to the heart, spine and skin by inappropriately placed needles.

More than 1 million adults in Britain are estimated to have had acupuncture, 3 per cent of the population. It is widely used to treat pain, including headache and

arthritis, and for nausea, to help weight loss and to assist recovery from stroke.

The findings of the review of safety, by Dr Hagen Rampes of the South Kensington and Chelsea Mental Health Centre, were presented to a conference in London yesterday. Dr Rampes said it was important to understand the risks of the procedure because it was becoming more popular and was used increasingly in the NHS. Last year Prince Charles appealed for alternative therapies including acupuncture to be made more widely available.

Dr Rampes said reports of life threatening complications from acupuncture had been made since 1965. They included delayed or missed diagnoses, deterioration while undergoing the treatment, pain caused by the needles, and drowsiness which could affect driving. Infections caused by dirty needles had led to cases of hepatitis - an outbreak was reported at a north London clinic last month - septicaemia and perichondritis (inflammation of the cartilage).

Serious adverse reactions were esti-

mated at between one in 10,000 and one in 100,000, he said. Normally they would be dealt with by hospital doctors and in many cases these failed to take a proper history which revealed the cause of the problem.

He said acupuncturists needed to know about anatomy but there was no system of registration or requirement to undergo training. "These injuries can be prevented with proper training and prudent and cautious needling."

Professor Edward Ernst, head of the department of complementary medicine at the University of Exeter, said: "Acupuncture is not totally safe. We know of serious side effects but we are at a loss to establish how frequently they occur. Under-reporting must be huge." He said acupuncture associations should establish their own registration and training system.

He added that the technique was still likely to be safer than drugs. "More people die of aspirin than of acupuncture needles. The acupuncturist is more dangerous than the acupuncture."

Newborn baby strangled

DETECTIVES investigating the death of a newborn baby found discarded in a bin bag outside a children's theme park said yesterday that the child had been strangled.

Police launched a murder inquiry after the child's body was discovered on Saturday by a man walking his dog. Detective Chief Inspector John Hester said a post mortem carried out on the body of baby "Callum", found dumped in a wooded area next to Gulliver's World in Warrington, Cheshire, confirmed the cause of death as strangulation. He appealed for help from the public, and said he was disappointed with the response so far. "This lack of news about the mother suggests three possible scenarios," he added. "One, that she is somehow involved in Callum's death; two, that she is now too ill to come forward; or three, that someone else may have disposed of the body and that person is holding the mother against her will."

Mugger's sword attack

A MUGGING victim had his right hand partially severed after he was attacked by a man with a sword, police said yesterday. West Midlands Police said the unnamed man, aged 31, underwent an emergency operation to sew on the hand after being attacked in Foleshill, Coventry, on Friday.

A spokesman said the attacker, who was black and in his late-twenties, produced the weapon after his victim refused to hand over the contents of his pockets. He added that the injured man, who is recovering in hospital, had raised his hand to protect himself from the sword.

DAILY POEM

Displaced Person Looks at a Cage-Bird
by D J Enright

Every single day, going to where I stay
(how long?), I pass the canary
In the window. Big bird, all perched out,
Looming and booming in the window's blank.

Closing a pawky eye, tapping its hairy chest,
flexing a brawny wing,
Every single day, coming from where I stay
(How long?), I pass this beastly thing.

How I wish it were dead!
- Florid, complacent, rent-free and overfed,
Feather-bedded, pensioned, free from wear and tear,
Earth has not anything to show less fair.

I do wish it were dead!
Then I'd write a better poetry,
On that poor wee bird, its feet in the air,
An innocent victim of something. Just like me.

This week's poems celebrate D J Enright's half century as a published poet and come from his new *Collected Poems 1948-1998* (Oxford University Press, £15). Enright taught English for many years in the Far East and Egypt, and has also worked as a publisher, critic and editor. This poem first appeared in *Some Men are Brothers* (1960).

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U-turn as veterans get Gulf illness test

By Ian Burrell

THE first official clinical tests of Gulf war veterans have been ordered by the Government more than seven years after the end of the conflict.

Until now, the only studies aimed at discovering the causes of so-called Gulf War Syndrome have been epidemiological, with veterans and serving soldiers being asked to



John Reid: Change of tack by the Government

fill out questionnaires on their health and Gulf experiences.

These studies have been received with hostility by many veterans - who regard them as slanted - and dogged by the difficulties of tracing sufficient respondents.

Yesterday in a change of tack, the armed forces minister John Reid said a group of randomly selected veterans will be subjected to clinical testing.

He said it would provide a "thorough and objective assessment" of the veterans' conditions. "My decision to fund this research... underlines my commitment to address Gulf veterans' concerns sympathetically and seriously," he said.

He said the £250,000 study

formed part of the Government's New Beginning programme, launched in July, and aimed at winning back the confidence of the veterans.

But the minister's announcement quickly ran into controversy as it emerged that the two-year clinical study is to be overseen by Professor Simon Wessely of King's College School of Medicine, in London.

Professor Wessely, a psychiatrist, has already angered veterans by claiming that they are just as healthy as the rest of the population. He has already been commissioned by the American government to run a US\$1m epidemiological study into Gulf illnesses in Britain.

Tony Flint, of the National Gulf Veterans and Families Association said: "This study is five years too late. We have already lost 160 guys. It also worries me that Professor Wessely is on record as saying that Gulf veterans are healthier than the average person."

Victims of Gulf war illnesses experience debilitating illnesses including chronic fatigue, muscle wastage and depression. Many veterans blame their condition on the cocktail of vaccinations and tablets taken by personnel in the Gulf. Some were also exposed to pesticide sprays.

Around 1,600 veterans may take legal action against the Ministry of Defence.

Richard Barr, of Norfolk solicitors Dawbarns, said clinical testing of 40 veterans was under way.

"Our own studies should be completed well before the end of the year and hopefully we will have some answers before these government trials have even started."



Sparkling: Susan Martin, organiser of Diana, Princess of Wales, A Tribute in Dress - a charity ball, fashion show and auction evening set for 29 May in Oswestry, Shropshire, - with a royal gown to go on show at the event, which was announced at Christie's, London, yesterday Photograph: Rui Xavier

Suds set to fly in soap giants' revolution

By Glenda Cooper
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

IT COULD revolutionise the way we wash our clothes as much as the tea bag turned the tea market on its head. Britain's leading detergent manufacturers are planning a tablet that could replace washing powder.

The suds are bound to fly as both Lever Brothers and Procter & Gamble plan to bring out their own version of the tablet later this year, adding more fuel to the ongoing soap wars.

Traditionally detergent has been sold in powder or liquid form. The advantage of the tablet is that it would allow people to use the correct dose and cut waste and spillage. The advantage to the manufacturers is less clear-cut as consumers usually, at present, use too high a dose.

Neither Lever Brothers, the home laundry division of Unilever, nor Procter & Gamble, would reveal the exact dates of the tablets' launch. Helen Fenwick of Lever Brothers said: "We will be launching nationally and we will be

the first to do that." She added the tablets were in response to customers' desire for "simplicity and convenience".

Procter & Gamble are more cautiously launching their version, Ariel Discs, in Grimby and Cleethorpes in a test-marketing operation. "We're making sure that it is something that consumers want," said Dominic Hayes, public relations manager.

The renewal of the soap wars comes almost four years after Unilever launched the disastrous "Persil Power"

detergent which had a manganese accelerator to give greater cleaning power. Unfortunately the accelerator was defective and tests showed it could rot clothes in the wash. Unilever eventually had to withdraw the product.

If the tablets work, they will herald a "revolution", say industry watchers. But the tablets must perform as promised if the detergent makers are not to find themselves in the midst of another fiasco.

David Benady of Marketing Week said: "[Manufacturers] had the tech-

nology for several years but they've held back because it would take away extra sales. I think now Levers doesn't have that much choice because they have seen their market share decline." He added that there were technical difficulties, that the tablets must "dissolve in water but not dissolve in the packet and there's some difficulty in that".

But Mr Hayes said that Procter & Gamble had cracked that problem with a soft inside and a hard outside which only dissolves in water. "It's phenomenal," he said.

Civil servants block pardons for First World War deserters

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

MINISTRY OF Defence officials are locked in battle with ministers over demands for pardons to be issued to more than 300 soldiers who were shot for desertion and cowardice in the First World War.

The *Daily Mail* newspaper reported yesterday that pardon campaigners were "likely to have their hopes dashed".

But Andrew Mackinlay, the Labour MP for Thurrock who has been leading the pardon campaign, yesterday backed ministry denials that any decision had been reached by John Reid, the defence minister who has been reviewing the cases.

"I know that the minister will

be meeting with lawyers and academics supporting the pardons campaign in the next few weeks," Mr Mackinlay said. "These meetings are being arranged at the request of the minister."

The Ministry of Defence said it was possible that ministers would announce their decision this summer. "But no timescale has been set," said a spokesman, who added that it was a complex matter.

Soon after last May's election, *The Independent* reported that the 307 British soldiers executed during the First World War for cowardice, desertion and other battlefield offences "could be pardoned by the end of the year".

It is a reflection of official tenacity and resistance that

ministers have been unable to come to any conclusion since.

At every step of the way, officials have managed to come up with a stream of legal, administrative and other reasons for a rejection of the pardon campaign backed by ministers, MPs and the Royal British Legion.

Officials have argued that if a blanket pardon was given, some soldiers who were certainly guilty of cowardice would be included; and a review of First World War courts martial would open the "floodgates" to demands for more retrospective pardons - and possible claims for compensation.

The men from the ministry are trying to persuade Mr Reid that it would be more appropriate to issue a general expression of regret for the

apparent injustice the men suffered - rather than the more formal process of pardon.

Mr Reid and more than one-third of the current Labour Cabinet voted for a pardon in the Commons in 1996, when the Conservative government successfully beat off a legislative amendment from Mr Mackinlay.

Last year, Mr Mackinlay tabled a Commons motion, arguing that the vast majority of the 307 executed were as patriotic and brave as their million other compatriots who perished in the conflict.

It is argued that many of the executed soldiers - some of whom were just 19 when they were shot - were suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome.

Peace protesters cite 'laws of God' in court

By Andrew Buncombe

TWO PEACE campaigners in their seventies cited the Coronation Oath of Elizabeth I when they appeared in court yesterday charged with cutting the fence of an atomic bomb factory.

Sarah Hipperson, 70 and Elizabeth Walford, 77, said that the production of nuclear weapons broke "the laws of God" - something everyone is duty bound to uphold.

In what may be a landmark case, Reading Crown Court was told that the two women had been among protesters who cut the fence at Burghfield Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) in Berkshire. They carried out their protest on 5 August 1996, the 51st anniversary of the first military use of an atomic bomb at Hiroshima.

Barnaby Evans, prosecuting, said that the pair, with two others, had cut the fence 74 times, causing £10,200 worth of dam-

age. The court was told that the women made no attempt to run away when they were arrested by Ministry of Defence officers.

Ms Hipperson told officers: "I would like to say that I cut the fence because of Crown land, belonging to Her Majesty the Queen. Under the 1558 Coronation Oath (of Elizabeth I) all citizens of the country, including officers of the Ministry of Defence and AWE, have to obey the laws of God. I believe what is happening in AWE Burghfield is contrary to the law of God and that is why I cut the fence."

Mr Evans said: "These defendants are anti-nuclear campaigners... You may agree with their views or you may disagree but it would be hard for anyone to doubt their sincerity."

Both women, who gave their address as Yellow Gate at the women's peace camp, Greenham Common, Berkshire, deny damaging property.

The case continues.

Two held over island murders

By Louise Jury

TWO ALBANIAN farm workers were named yesterday as the men facing formal murder charges after they allegedly confessed to killing a British couple on a Greek island.

Roy Eccles, 55, and his wife Judith, 49, were stabbed to death in Kaminarata on the island of Cephalonia in the early hours of Thursday at their villa.

Labros Pappas, 22, who lived in the same village as the couple, and Edward Elmazi, 19, were arrested at gunpoint on the neighbouring island of Lefkas after a brief chase.

The arrests came after a tip-off from a member of the Albanian immigrant community on Cephalonia.

A police spokesman said the pair had confessed to ransacking the couple's villa and killing them. They left cameras,

gold jewellery and other valuables behind them when they fled.

Detectives took samples from blood stains found on the men's clothing.

It had emerged the two farm workers were missing from Cephalonia after police questioned and fingerprinted more than 100 Albanians in the wake of the killings.

Impoverished Albanians flooding into Greece have been accused of a number of crimes recently.

Mr and Mrs Eccles retired to Cephalonia from their home in St Neot's, Cambridgeshire, last October. Their bodies were discovered by a neighbour, Richard Coward, 52, and Mrs Eccles' brother, Derek Wooding.

Mr Coward said: "We still do not understand why they were murdered. I am angry. There is no rhyme or reason to it - no logic."

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Brunei prince settles £180m case

By Kate Watson-Smyth

THE MOST expensive civil action in British legal history – between Prince Jefri of Brunei and two of his closest emissaries – was settled out of court amid speculation that the sultan had ordered his brother to put an end to all his court cases around the world.

A spokesman for the prince dismissed the idea of any intervention by the sultan. But it was confirmed that the prince and the Manoukian brothers, who were suing each other for claims totalling £180m, had reached an "amicable agreement" after negotiations between their lawyers in a London hotel.

The details are confidential but a source close to the case said yesterday that Prince Jefri had ordered his lawyers to find a settlement. It is believed that both sides will share costs of around £10m.

Two weeks ago, a United States law suit filed by Shannon Markerie, a former Miss USA, who claimed that she was held captive in a Brunei palace for use as a "sex slave", was struck out. She has appealed and a similar case is be-



The settlement with the Manoukians (Bob, left, and Rafi, leaving the High Court) has saved Prince Jefri (right) an embarrassing cross-examination about his lifestyle

the prince for £80m claiming he reneged on two business deals, told the court that Prince Jefri kept up to 40 prostitutes at a time at the Dorchester Hotel in the West End of London. The prince, a Muslim who has four wives and three children, was said to have built a string of palaces in his country, many of which were used for "his sex parties", the Manoukians alleged.

The court was also told that he spent millions of pounds on expensive *objets d'art*, including a set of diamond-encrusted erotic watches.

Based in London, the Armenian-born brothers claimed that Prince Jefri reneged on a £25m deal to buy and operate the £190m Adelphi office building in central London and a £25m verbal agreement to refurbish part of the former Playboy Club. The prince counter-sued for an estimated

£100m, claiming that Rafi Manoukian channelled unreasonable profits out of him through an intricate web of companies based in Liechtenstein.

The case provided a glimpse into the lifestyle of the notoriously secretive Brunei royal family and, had a settlement not been reached, was likely to reveal many more claims about Prince Jefri's "appetite for extravagance and self-indulgence".

Even as a schoolboy the prince, 44, had a love of ostentation. A pupil at King Alfred's, London, he would arrive every morning in a black Mercedes flanked by bodyguards. The school, which costs around £2,300 a term, was an unlikely choice for the prince, however. There are no uniforms and children are encouraged to call staff by their first names. A brochure says that "civilised and relaxed behaviour is encouraged".

The prince is well known for driving through Brunei in a black Porsche with two motorcycle outriders. He has a fleet of 600 cars and a 180ft yacht called *Tis*. His first love is polo, a game he is reputed to play superbly, and last year he spent £3.5m to entice the world's best polo fami-

ly, the Heguys of Argentina, to play in Brunei for a year.

In the past he has flown the Chelsea football squad to Brunei to play against the national team, and persuaded Rod Stewart, Elton John and MC Hammer to perform at royal family get-togethers. But despite his extravagance, he is a popular figure in the sultanate where he arranged for the citizens to receive BBC television, the CNN network, and the London radio station Capital by satellite.

He recently bought Asprey, the Queen's jewellers, for £24m and was described in court as a "one man walking market".

However, the family's wealth is new. Despite being one of the oldest Malay ruling families, they lived in a modest house on stilts until the discovery of oil and gas fields in the late Sixties. The Sultan is now said to be worth an estimated £20bn.

The case afforded a brief glimpse into the lives of the richest family in the world but, having reached a deal, it is unlikely that they will allow their private affairs to be broadcast so widely in the future.



Plot to kill off extension to union rights

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

THE Government has been conducting a vigorous behind-the-scenes campaign in Europe to undermine moves to grant workers more rights.

Much to the anger of British unions, Downing Street has been trying to head off a European directive to give employees enhanced rights to consultation and information.

Yesterday the lobbying bore fruit when Unice, the European employers' organisation, refused to meet their union counterparts to thrash out a voluntary code.

In the absence of an agreement between the "social partners", the European Commission said it would now draft a detailed directive to force companies to inform and consult their employees. Unlike the directive on works councils, this initiative would affect organisations which only have workers in one country and possibly those with as few as 50 employees.

The Government is not convinced of the need for the measure, but indicated that it would abide by any deal concluded by the social partners. But sources in Europe said that its mildly sceptical public position belied its virulent opposition in private.

Tony Blair's opposition to the idea was made clear recently to Chancellor Kohl of Germany who it is understood then persuaded his country's employers' organisation to drop their support of the policy. That was said

to be sufficient to ensure a vote by Unice against consultations with unions.

Whitehall officials have written a letter to the other European Union governments in an attempt to enlist their support.

Adair Turner, director-general of the CBI, said there was "a real possibility" that there would be insufficient backing for the directive among European ministers. He hoped the commission would think again.

He said Unice had always been united in its opposition to the initiative. Employers simply had to decide whether they could have developed a less harmful code through a voluntary deal with unions.

John Monks, general secretary of the TUC, is known to be furious over the Government's attempt to head off the directive. Yesterday the TUC said that along with European colleagues British trade unionists were "disappointed" by the employers' decision. The TUC expected the Council of Ministers to vote for the directive and said the European Parliament was enthusiastic about the measure and was about to be given additional powers.

President Jacques Santer and Pádraig Flynn, the employment commissioner, yesterday expressed their "deep disappointment" with Unice's decision. They said it undermined the whole concept of partnership which was at the heart of European decision-making and said they would call a mini-summit on the future of "social dialogue".

Drive to cut bowel cancer with fibre

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

THE Government joined forces with a cancer charity to promote the products of a breakfast cereal manufacturer yesterday.

An alliance of 20 MPs including the health minister, Baroness Jay, backed an appeal by Kellogg's and the Cancer Research Campaign to increase consumption of high-fibre cereals such as All-Bran as a defence against Britain's second commonest – and least discussed – cause of cancer deaths.

Bowel cancer kills 49 people every day but half the 31,000 cases of the disease in the UK each year could be prevented if people ate more cereal fibre, fruit and vegetables, health-conscious MPs said. As well as saving lives, NHS costs would be cut by £84m.

An opinion poll published yesterday by the Cancer Research Campaign – which is receiving £1m over three years from Kellogg's – showed that 84 per cent of people were unaware that bowel cancer was a significant health threat, and less than 30 per cent knew that it was preventable.

The alliance said greater priority must be given to educating the public about the risks of disease – it kills two out of three people who are diagnosed as having it – if the recently published Government target for reducing cancer is to be achieved. Ministers pledged to cut the number of cancer deaths among under-65s by at least a fifth by 2010 in the Green Paper, *Our Healthier Nation*, published last month.

Baroness Jay said: "We are committed to reducing cancer deaths in this country and we wholeheartedly endorse this campaign to encourage people to help themselves with simple dietary measures."

Professor Gordon McVie, director-general of the Cancer Research Campaign, said: "£84m of the NHS spend on bowel cancer treatment and diagnosis and the incalculable cost of human suffering could be saved each year if only more people knew about prevention."

The campaign, launched yesterday in the House of Commons, has been spearheaded by the Liberal Democrat president, Robert Maclean, and follows an Early Day Motion signed by dozens of MPs.

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Prescott wins £300m bonus to bring Tube up to scratch before sale

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

THE LONDON Underground is to receive more than £300m in additional cash to upgrade the ailing network in the run-up to the sale of the capital's track and stations.

According to a pre-arranged pact, Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, will make it clear in his Budget speech today that the money was won by John Prescott, the Deputy

Prime Minister. Mr Prescott will take the political stage on Thursday to outline his plans partially to privatise the Tube. He is expected to say that the network will be broken up into two or three infrastructure companies and then leased to the private sector for 20 years.

In the most plausible scenario, "subsurface" lines - the Circle, District, Metropolitan, Hammersmith and City - will form one franchise and the deep lines - the Victoria, Pic-

cadilly, Jubilee, Central, Northern and Bakerloo - will form another, or be split into two.

Railtrack, which owns the nation's track and stations, will be allowed to bid for the whole system, raising the spectre of a private monopoly in place of a public one. Mr Prescott, however, is keen not to let that happen.

Today's budget will make good some of the cuts imposed by the previous administration. In the last Con-

servative budget, London Transport's spending was cut from £920m in 1996/97 to £150m in the year beginning 1999. LT has also had to absorb about £500m extra costs from the delayed Jubilee Line Extension (JLE).

In order to alleviate some of the short-term cash shortages, Mr Prescott has wrung the funding from the Treasury. There will be £100m for next year and £200m for 1999. Tight Treasury constraints have been bent - which will see money saved this year

added to the next 12 months' budget - yielding at least another £70m for the Tube. The Chancellor may also write off some of the JLE's extra costs.

The money is desperately needed for the crumbling network. Mr Prescott has accepted that any reorganisation will need to raise £7bn to bring the system up to scratch.

The Deputy Prime Minister needs to tread carefully. He has had to placate the left by annoying Labour's modernising faction - by

bandying phrases such as "publicly owned and publicly accountable" - while requiring new Labour's high priests to endorse his plans.

The result is a compromise. So train operations will be kept in the public sector - until they fail the public's aspirations. Then they can be sold off. Mr Prescott will also need to deal with criticism (already made by some trade unionists) that the private-public deal will fragment the Tube. And Whitehall advisors are already

hatching ways to diffuse one political time-bomb: City fees. Mr Prescott has been warned that a Tube sell-off could cost £100m in advisors' costs.

Travellers face disruption on London Underground next week because of a one-day strike by guards. Members of the Rail Maritime and Transport union who work on the Northern Line will walk out on 26 March over the abolition of guards' jobs as the service switches to one-person operation later this year.

Brown and Blair plan a budget roadshow

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

GORDON BROWN likes to imagine himself as Lloyd George to Tony Blair's Herbert Asquith. But this week he will play Judy Finnigan to the Prime Minister's Richard Madeley when the two take to the road to promote their budget.

Clearly still stung by reports of splits, the two will underline how united they are by hosting a question-and-answer session in London on Thursday. In front of an invited audience, the composition of which Downing Street was vague about yesterday, they will expand on their vision of today's budget. Although the venue for the session has not been revealed, it will take place at lunchtime.

Yesterday a spokesman for Mr Blair said he had worked out final details of the budget speech with Mr Brown at Chequers on Saturday. The Chancellor was expected to be on his feet for an hour, about the time he spoke in his first budget, in July. This week's budget would be part of a grand vision, the Prime Minister's spokesman said. It would form one of the most significant events of this five-year Parliament.

"He believes Gordon is doing a brilliant job and that he will be seen as one of the great radical reforming chancellors... This speech will set a clear course for the next phase of the modernisation of Britain," he said. But the budget would be grand in spirit rather than in reality, he added. "When I talked about the budget being big, I was not being sizeist. It was a

qualitative rather than a quantitative description."

At the heart of the package will be the theme of making work pay, designed to show there was a real difference between Labour and the Tories. However, some commentators were predicting the plan to bring an end to boom-and-bust economics would lead to more public-spending controls.

Long after the parameters of the budget had been set and several days after the fine details of the speech were discussed, the Chancellor was facing heavy lobbying about its contents. He was being asked to provide extra money for everything from wildlife to church roofs.

The Liberal Democrats weighed in with a demand for extra funding for public services. This should include schooling for all three and four year-olds, smaller class sizes, more books and equipment and a programme to eliminate the education repairs backlog. The Chancellor should also cut hospital waiting lists, abolish eye and dental check charges and provide at least 4 per cent annual growth for the health service. All this could be funded by a penny on tax and 5p on a packet of cigarettes, the party's Treasury spokesman, Malcolm Bruce, said.

Anti-smoking groups had more ambitious plans, demanding an extra 24p on a packet of cigarettes, while the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds wanted pesticide taxes and the Church of England wanted VAT removed from church repairs.



Cooking up a statement: The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, in the form of a cake, getting a taste of his own medicine

Global phone taps feared in new EU deal

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

PLANS to set up a global telephone tapping operation are alleged to be behind a European anti-crime agreement being rushed through by European Ministers.

Two civil liberties campaign groups, Justice and Statewatch, have complained to the Lords Select Committee on the European Communities that a new Convention of Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters is part of a larger, FBI-inspired project to create worldwide surveillance of telecommunications.

The first draft of the convention, in 1996, did not mention the interception of telecommunications, and when an attempt was made to inject the issue into the convention last year, no agreement could be reached.

But British ministers tabled a compromise proposal in January, "in the hope of reaching early agreement."

Under the plan, any country wanting to tap into satellite telephone calls would have to get normal domestic clearance, but the intercepting country - where the satellite ground station was based - would simply have to "click a switch" to give an instant relay of any conversation.

It was argued that if the tapping country had to get domestic clearance as well, the whole process would be considerably slowed down and it would "impose a possibly unwelcome administrative burden on that state".

The Lords committee gave the draft convention broad endorsement, but it has reported that, "According to Statewatch, there was an EU-FBI plan to create a global system for the surveillance of telecommunications."

That plan, Statewatch said,

was being implemented through a council of ministers resolution, adopted in January 1995 - but not published until November 1996 - and a memorandum of understanding between the EU and other countries, which was only deposited in Lords and Commons libraries in February 1997, in response to a parliamentary question.

The UK proposals were sent to the select committee on 12 January, with consideration by Brussels officials due on 26 January; the Lords Committee agreed its report on 17 February, and it was published last week, on 12 March.

Justice did not receive a copy until last Friday, and the Home Office was unable to say when Ministers would be deciding the issue.

According to the Lords report, "Justice said that a group of 20 states, co-ordinated by the FBI, had been working towards a harmonisation of national laws to remove any obstacles to the interception of all forms of telecommunications by law enforcement agencies."

"In Justice's view, there was a serious risk that the Convention, combined with the [other] international agreements, would open the way to extensive and increasing surveillance of individuals both inside and outside the jurisdiction of the [EU] member states."

Madeline Colvin, of Justice, told *The Independent* yesterday that she was dissatisfied with the checks that were being carried out on the new proposals - before they were pushed through.

"The difficulty is that it is all very technical and very few organisations are ever allowed to know what is going on," she said. "We get our information, not directly from any Government department on this, but only from the House of Lords. There is really no proper consultation."

US ambassador to Ireland retires

By Alan Murdoch
Ireland Correspondent

THE American Ambassador to Ireland, Jean Kennedy-Smith, who played a critical role in early stages of the Northern Ireland peace process, is to retire in the summer.

The youngest of six sisters of the late US President John F. Kennedy, used her family influence in early 1994, when successfully lobbying the White House to allow Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams a visa to visit the US. The move, encouraged by the then-Thoiseach Albert Ray-

nolds, caused uproar among Unionist and Conservative circles in Britain, but was elsewhere credited with advancing the August 1994 IRA ceasefire.

There was also controversy over her relations with embassy staff who dissented with her pro-active role on Northern Ireland diplomacy. Similar disagreements arose with US Ambassador to London, Raymond Seitz, now retired, who recently claimed she had been too close to Sinn Féin. The claims were forcefully rejected by the Irish Government. The Thoiseach Bertie Aherne said

yesterday "she has been with the peace process all of the way from the very beginning. If (the Adams visa support) had not happened, it is no exaggeration to say that other events might not have fallen into place. She used good judgement. She was not by any means one-sided."

Mrs Kennedy-Smith, 70, was appointed in 1993 by President Clinton. She helped arrange his 1995 visit to both parts of Ireland which attracted huge crowds. That experience is believed to have strengthened his interest in helping achieve a political settlement.



Peace broker: Jean Kennedy-Smith

Defectors head for Lib-Dem sanctuary

By Anthony Bevins

THE Liberal Democrats have notched up 24 local Labour defections since the election, the party revealed yesterday.

The latest switch took place in Liverpool last week, when Chris Newby, a Labour councillor in the city's Broadgreen ward, joined the Liberal Democrats on the council.

Nick Harvey, the MP who chairs the party's Campaigns and Communications Committee, told *The Independent* yesterday: "We are delighted that a substantial number of

Labour councillors have decided to join us."

The Government decision to cut child benefit for lone parents was cited as a significant "catalyst" for the change.

But Mr Harvey said: "Our new members cite several reasons for joining us. Many contrast our commitment to increase spending on public services, through carefully targeted taxes, with the Government's broken pledges on class sizes and health waiting lists."

"Many, too, identify with our policies on constitutional reform and Europe."

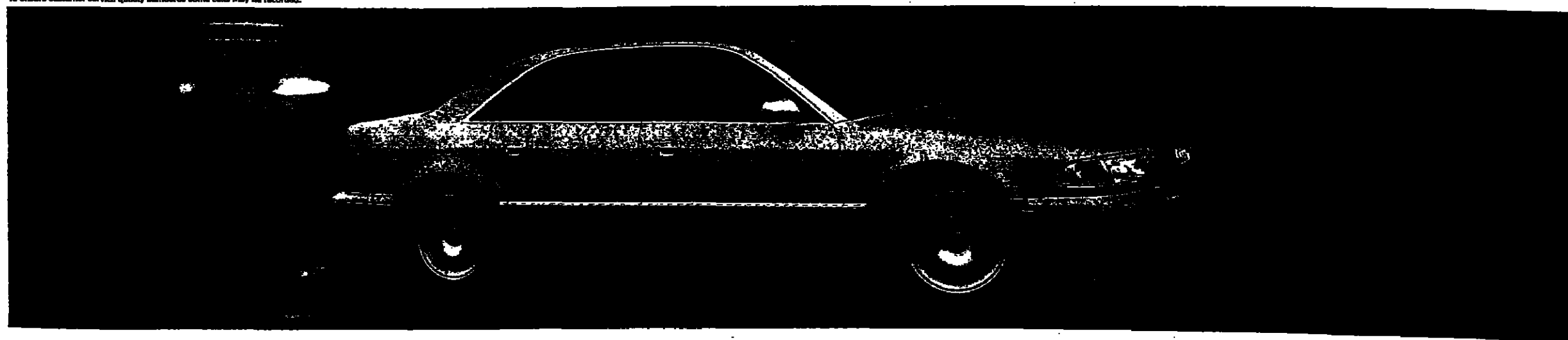
A party spokesman said last night that it was not a question of the Liberal Democrats moving to the left; they had remained where they had always been, while Labour had moved to the right. The 24 defections since the election compare with eight local Labour councillors and "celebrities" who defected in the 12 months up to last May.

Since the start of the year, the Liberal Democrats have been joined by councillor Carl Kisicki of Lewisham; Keith Iton, the ex-chairman of Hull West and Hessle Council; councillor Daniel McCarthy, of

Southwark and councillor Meher Khan, former Mayor of Waltham Forest.

But Mr Harvey was also keen to point out that not all the defections were from Labour - citing "the decisions of former Tory MPs and MEPs like Hugh Dykes, Anna McCurley and Peter Price to become Liberal Democrats." Other Tory defectors include Keith Raffan, former MP for Delyn; Lord Thomas of Swynerton; Arthur and Susan Bell, of the Scottish Tory Reform Group; and Lady Mary O'Hagan, former head of the Tory MEPs' London office.

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Soldier 'covered his tracks' after killing girl, nine

A soldier pretended to be an anxious parent after killing his nine-year-old stepdaughter and burying her in an animal burrow, a court was told yesterday.

Nigel Pascoe, QC, opening the case for the prosecution at Bristol Crown Court, said Private Miles Evans was trying to cover his tracks for the "savage and cruel" murder of Zoe in January last year.

He claimed that Pte Evans, 24, had taken the girl in the night from his married quarters home at Warminster, Wiltshire, to kill her and bury her head first in an animal hole on Battlesbury Hill, less than a mile from the family home.

Mr Pascoe told the jury that Mr Evans' wife Paula, raised the alarm the following morning. Mr Pascoe claimed: "Miles Evans continued to pretend that he was an anxious parent but we say he was nothing of the sort. At all times we say he was the killer seeking only to cover his tracks and to divert suspicion from himself."

The "callous killer" left behind two crucial pieces of evidence, said the prosecution lawyer. The first was his own T-shirt, stained with Zoe's blood and his semen, from sexual intercourse earlier with his wife. The second was a pair of the child's pants, probably dropped after Zoe had been killed and when he was en route to burying her. Her body was not found for six weeks.

Pte Evans has pleaded not guilty to the charge that he murdered his stepdaughter at Warminster between 9 January and 12 January last year.

Mr Pascoe maintained that when the jury considered all the



Zoe: jury told stepfather left two crucial bits of evidence

evidence, such as the T-shirt and particularly the time frame of the crime, it could only find one candidate as the killer - Miles Evans.

Any other possibility, the Crown claimed, would be fanciful. But Mr Pascoe stressed that Pte Evans had pleaded not guilty and had throughout denied his involvement.

Mr Pascoe added: "I want to stress in as clear a manner as I possibly can that the child's mother, Paula, played no part whatsoever in the death of Zoe."

The court heard how Zoe was put to bed on the night of her death at 10.20pm. The police were telephoned the next day soon after midday and the biggest search ever conducted in this country for a missing child began.

The search involved neighbours, friends, police, Army personnel and helicopters.

Mr Pascoe went on to describe how Zoe's body was

found on 26 February on Battlesbury Hill, hidden in a hole used by animals. He told how at some stage animals had pulled the body out of the hole and the lower part of the child's remains were damaged.

Mr Pascoe said that Zoe had suffered an injury to her nose, and had inhaled blood and died of asphyxiation. He said her small crop-top had been stuffed into her mouth.

Mr Pascoe said suggestions that Zoe had left the house on her own, had sleepwalked to her death or that an intruder had broken in were inconceivable.

Mr Pascoe added that the way Miles Evans behaved in the hours after her death and the lies that he told were the actions of a man trying to conceal what had happened.

"His behaviour on the night after her death was quite extraordinary. While Paula searched in desperation, Miles Evans went to bed. He said he wanted to keep his strength up for the morning of the search."

Mr Pascoe told the court that a set of clothes belonging to Pte Evans was still missing. This, he said, was "very significant" as Zoe's murderer would have been covered in blood.

Mr Pascoe told the court that Miles and Zoe had a good relationship and that Miles clearly enjoyed physical contact with Zoe. He said most nights there was play fighting between the two.

"It will be for you to consider whether Miles Evans's physical horseplay hid a darker attraction for his step-daughter," he told the court.

The trial continues today.



Poster art: The author Stephen Calloway dresses as Aubrey Beardsley yesterday to launch his book about the illustrator, published by V&A Publications. The Victoria and Albert museum is to run an exhibition of Beardsley's work in October
Photograph: David Rose

Bird foul-up blacks out lightships

By Roger Dobson

BIRDS which have been casting a shadow over solar-powered lightships are about to get an earful.

Thousands of birds have been leaving their debris on the ships and the solar panels, threatening the only power source for lightships and turning the highly visible bright red of the boats into a cloudy shade of white.

Now, in a bid to repel the unwanted guest, bird-scaring equipment is being installed on two unmanned vessels which will mimic the distress calls of half a dozen birds known to be regular vis-

itors. Scientists hope the dawn-to-dusk chorus will deter the birds from fouling the solar panels and the ships, delegates to an international conference on pest management at the University of Wales, Cardiff, were told.

Birds have always been something of a problem for Trinity House, the organisation responsible for lighthouses and buoys around the coast of Britain, but the trouble has been exacerbated by the arrival of unmanned and fully automatic lightships, two of which are now on station in the Wash and at South Goodwin off Dover.

Barry Rodwell, deputy principal de-

velopment engineer with Trinity House Lighthouse Service, said: "We have hit a problem with birds fouling and it can be quite horrendous. We normally paint the ships red and they can get white all over in a very short time with the numbers of birds involved. These ships are painted red to act as a marker to shipping during the daytime and changing colour to white is not very helpful."

"And of course, if the solar panels get covered up, they would stop producing the necessary power for the various aids to navigation on board the vessels."

He added: "It was not a problem

when they were diesel powered because they were visited for refuelling and maintenance, and once the ship was alongside it would hose the vessel down."

A bird-scaring system designed by Sussex-based Scarecrow Bio-Acoustic Systems will be used to keep the birds away. The company has digitised the distress sounds of a number of birds including the herring gull, black-headed gull, common gull and lapwing, and installed them in a loudspeaker unit that will be set up on the ships.

A system has already proved its worth at the British Embassy in Rome after it was invaded by starlings.

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White House wheels out big guns to defend beleaguered President

By Mary Dejevsky
in Washington

THE WHITE HOUSE mounted an all-out damage limitation exercise yesterday in response to televised claims by a White House voluntary worker, Kathleen Willey, that President Bill Clinton had kissed and groped her when she went to ask him for a job four years ago.

Mr Clinton, clearly stung and concerned by the allegations, took time out from a Washington school visit to repeat his sworn testimony that "nothing improper happened" between himself and Ms Willey. He told reporters that he had not seen the television interview - he was at the presidential re-

treating at Camp David through the weekend - but that he was "mystified and disappointed" by the allegations. He said he had a "very clear memory" of his 1993 meeting with Ms Willey, "and I told the truth".

Attacking on three fronts, White House officials repeated Mr Clinton's denial; they fielded the President's lawyer and communications director to call into question Ms Willey's good faith, and they laboured behind the scenes to remind White House press corps members of Mr Clinton's version and their duty to objective reporting.

Minutes after Ms Willey's interview on Sunday evening, the White House had issued a brief statement, denying her allega-

tions on Mr Clinton's behalf. "Ms Willey's allegation is simply not true," the statement said.

In the interview, broadcast in the CBS weekly news programme, *60 Minutes*, Ms Willey had described hesitantly, but vividly, how Mr Clinton had clinched her in a hug that lasted "longer than I expected", kissed her on the lips, touched her breasts and put his hand on her genitals. The encounter took place on 29 November 1993, when Ms Willey, overwhelmed by financial difficulties, went to ask Mr Clinton for a paid job.

Mr Clinton does not deny that the meeting took place, but said in his sworn testimony that, while he might have embraced Ms Willey and kissed her

briefly on the forehead, there was "nothing sexual about it".

One of the White House's chief weapons is Mr Clinton's lawyer in the case, Robert Bennett, who said that Mr Clinton was more angry than Mr Bennett had ever seen him.

Also fronting the President's defence was the White House director of communications, Ann Lewis. Interviewed on the breakfast show yesterday, she asked why, if the 1993 meeting had gone so wrong for Ms Willey, she had subsequently exchanged friendly letters with Mr Clinton and insistently volunteered to help with his 1996 re-election campaign. Ms Lewis said that Ms Willey had gone to see her personally to volunteer. She said:

"Watching last night, I thought, gee, if I hadn't had my personal experience [with Ms Willey], how would I feel about it?"

While mainstream US media went out of their way to present both sides of the story and not to suggest that Ms Willey's interview had the potential to topple the President, a prediction several analysts made when the revelations about the former White House trainee, Monica Lewinsky, broke two months ago, others were less circumspect.

Orrin Hatch, the Republican chairman of the Senate judiciary committee said: "If these allegations are true, that is the end of this presidency."

Ms Willey's charges also appeared to have lost Mr Clinton

the support of the mainstream feminists represented by the National Organisation of Women. Patricia Ireland, president of NOW, said of Ms Willey's account: "This is beyond the idea of the likeable rogue ... and really on into ... sexual abuse."

Meanwhile, the threat to Mr Clinton of a second White House trainee scandal seemed to have receded. The appearance of a 24-year-old New York singer, Sherrie Densuk, who had been expected to testify in the Lewinsky investigation this week, has been postponed. Ms Densuk was quoted as saying that she did not know Monica Lewinsky, and the White House said there was no record that she had ever been a trainee there.

US army reassures women

THE UNITED STATES Defense Secretary, William Cohen, sought to reassure women recruits to the armed forces yesterday in the wake of recent sexual harassment scandals in the military, writes Mary Dejevsky.

Mr Cohen announced that the number of female recruits and training officers was to be increased and selection procedures improved.

While his remarks were presented as a response to the recommendations of a congressional report, the timing indicated that they were also addressed to disconsolate servicewomen following the court martial verdict on Sergeant-Major Gene McKinney, the army's former top enlisted man, last week.

McKinney was acquitted last Friday on 18 counts of sexual harassment and found guilty on one charge of obstructing the course of justice, where there was recorded telephone evidence against him. Six women had testified against him, alleging improper advances and threats, but there was no third-party evidence for any of the accusations. The verdict has drawn fierce criticism from women's groups.

McKinney was due to be sentenced yesterday. He faces up to five years in prison, a dishonourable discharge and loss of pension.



Rock of ages: Olivia Newton-John (left), Stockard Channing and Didi Conn (right) celebrating the re-release of the film *Grease* on its 20th anniversary. The trio starred with John Travolta, who was unable to attend the Hollywood screening. Photograph: Reuters

Colombian rebels target American advisers

COLOMBIA (Reuters) - A rebel commander who recently handed the Colombian army its worst defeat in more than 30 years has warned that he would begin targeting US military advisers, accusing them of heading covert counter-insurgency operations.

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) chief Fabian Ramirez

said his fighters were in "combative mood" after their recent victory and were ready to strike at thousands of army reinforcements being airlifted into Caqueta province.

Two weeks ago, 300 FARC guerrillas attacked the army's crack Third Mobile Brigade - a cornerstone of the military's anti-guerrilla strategy - killing

83 soldiers and capturing 43 others. "The claim that the United States is combating drugs in Colombia is a sophism. All the military and economic aid it is giving to the army is to fight the guerrillas," Ramirez said.

"Most (Colombian army) battalions have US advisers so it is clear that Colombian rage will explode at any mo-

ment and the objective will be to defeat the Americans." Last year, the line between the anti-drug and anti-guerrilla wars became blurred when White House drug czar Gen Barry McCaffrey authorized the use of US aid to combat what he dubbed "15,000 narco-guerrillas."

FARC has always denied any links with drug cartels.

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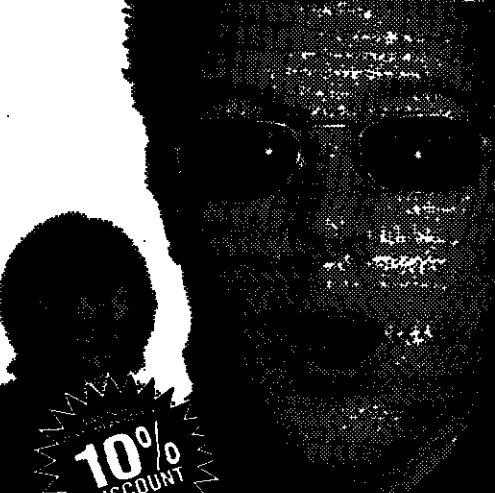
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Head start: A South Korean army cadet adjusting his cap before being commissioned at a graduation ceremony in Seoul yesterday. President Kim Dae-jung stressed the need for the army's political neutrality. Photograph: Reuters

Mexican crime chills sunshine pensioners

By Phil Davison
in Cuernavaca

MARK NIXON was not quite your typical American pensioner in Mexico. He enjoyed the climate in Cuernavaca, the "City of Eternal Spring", and the south-of-the-border value for his dollars. But he had been more successful than most of his fellow American pensioners or "snowbirds" who spend the winter of their years, or at least the American winters, in this city just south of Mexico City.

Mr Nixon, 60, had a reputation as "architect to the stars" in Beverly Hills, California, before moving south a decade ago. In Cuernavaca he turned a ruined hacienda into the renowned El Rancho Cuernavaca, a hotel that became backdrop to several Hollywood movies and photo shoots. The setting was often billed in magazines as "Under the

Volcano", a reference to the novel written by Malcolm Lowry in and around this town.

Last week, Mr Nixon was found dead in his home, with tens of stab wounds to his body. The same day, another American, Joseph Anisz Poston, 50, a retired dancer, was found dead in his home in the posh Lomas area of Mexico City. Mr Poston's testicles had been cut off.

The killings sent shivers through the tens of thousands of Americans who live in Mexico, either on short- or long-term business assignments, as full-time retirees, or as winter "snowbirds". Americans had hoped that the last killing of a compatriot, the businessman Peter Zarate, just before Christmas in Mexico City, had been a fluke, a simple robbery. He was shot dead after taking a taxi whose driver was in cahoots with a gang.

Whatever the motives for the respective murders - the subject of feverish speculation - all three were American, all are dead and their compatriots, from students to pensioners, are jittery. The US embassy has upgraded its warnings to Americans not to take taxi cabs in the streets of Mexico City and to take extra security measures at home.

The general consensus here is that the latest Americans killed were not picked out because of their nationality, but were merely three more victims of a crime wave that is plaguing this country, particularly the capital. There are an average of three murders a day in Mexico City and 82 reported rapes.

In the central belt around Mexico City, there were 700 highway robberies last year, often on tourist buses. One of the worst routes is the most potentially touristic - the relatively new motorway between Mexico City and

the Pacific resort of Acapulco. It was on that highway that Mexico's latest scandal recently began. Police from the state of Morelos were allegedly dumping body of someone who had been tortured beside the highway when police from the neighbouring state of Guerrero spotted them. According to witnesses, the latter were upset not by the fact that fellow police were dumping a body but that they were dumping it on someone else's patch. "Our state is not a rubbish dump," one Guerrero officer reportedly said.

Asked to explain the victim's apparent torture marks, the Morelos police reportedly said "we were trying to question him and he got over-excited. He was bumping into everything." The Morelos chief of police and prosecutor have both been charged with "torture and cover-up" and face long jail terms.

As crisis deepens, one man's pain is another man's pleasure

When describing the practice of revelling in the misfortunes of others, English speakers have to rely on a German word - *schadenfreude*. The Chinese have no such problem. Here in Hong Kong we've been hearing a lot of people saying "hung di joy lok wai", literally meaning "happy about other people's disasters".

There is a great deal to be happy about these days in financially-challenged Hong Kong. Admittedly we have caught no more than the tail end of the financial crisis sweeping across Asia but it has been sufficiently potent to give us something to chuckle about.

All the people you love to hate are facing problems. I list them in no particular order but they include Hong Kong's voracious landlords, stockbrokers and other money pushers, estate agents, banks, the managers of posh hotels and the purveyors of designer clothing.

Just months ago this unsavoury assortment of the rich and mean were going about their business without a care in the world. Now things are very different.

Property prices are diving through the floor, which prompted a friend of mine to ask for a rent reduction last October. The crisis was just taking hold then and his landlord replied that as he was the first to ask for a reduction, he would never be given one. The block of flats where this occurred is now half empty.

Out of sheer malice I have spent small amounts of time peering into the windows of totally deserted estate agents. I like to see the previously surly persons employed in these premises leap out of their seats and dash outside to see if they can help me.

Malice also takes me to make enquiries about room rates at Hong Kong's notoriously overpriced hotels where the word "discount" was about as rare as a modest stockbroker. Ask for a discount these days and you will hear nothing resembling the "D" word but are almost certain to be regaled with talk of packages. It amounts to the same thing but doesn't sound half as crude.

As for stockbrokers, and so-called analysts, who could be spared spending the equivalent of some smaller nation's gross domestic product on an evening's entertainment, they are now more subdued, some are even out of work.

Only a hypocrite would pretend that it gives them no pleasure to observe these sorry souls clutching a half drunk bottle of some tepid Mexican beer for an entire evening.

HONG KONG DIARY

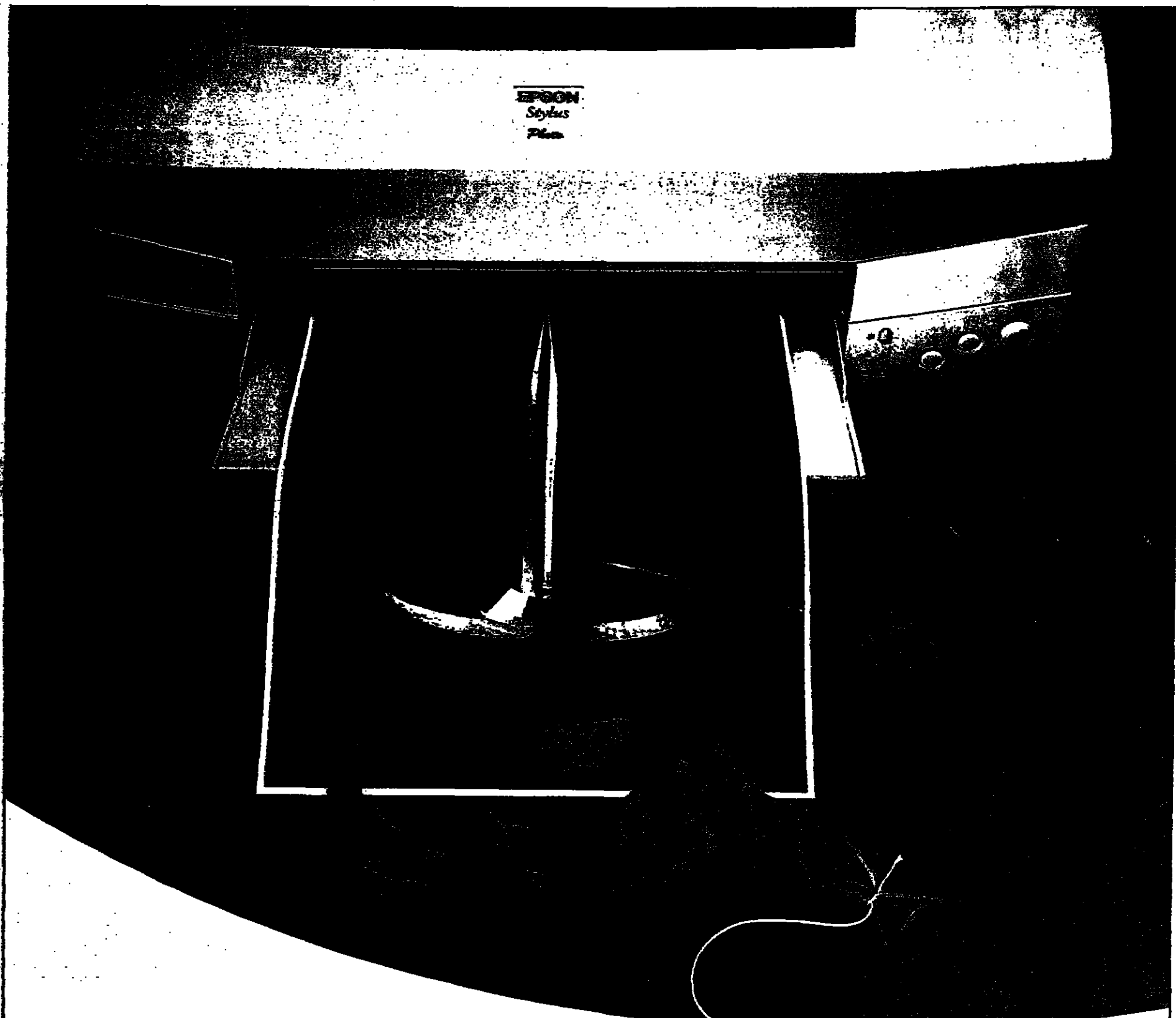


Stephen Vines

Before reluctantly departing from the baiting of financial analysts I am keeping a careful count of the number of such people who are claiming to have been the "only one" to have predicted the current financial crisis. The tally of such "exclusives" is now in double figures. Rigorously excluded from this total is one of Hong Kong's most flamboyant fund managers, known as Dr Doom. His real name is Marc Faber and he has been predicting the collapse of Asian markets through two major booms when anyone following his advice would have forgone making a small fortune.

Hong Kong is a hot contender for the title of having the world's worst climate. Most of the year it is extremely humid, and, more recently, heavily polluted. The worst of the humidity starts round about now. Unless precautions are taken clothes left in cupboards take on a lurid green appearance as they become covered in mould. However, determined to look on the brighter side, I can report that this is all good news for us cigar smokers. Only a fool would need to invest in a humidifier in these circumstances.

The Hong Kong government and its more extreme supporters who are currently stuffing themselves with Peking duck while attending the monotonous sessions of the rubber-stamp National People's Congress in Peking, hate nothing more than the enormously popular radio talk-in shows, which score top ratings here. The trouble with these shows is that Mr and Mrs Joe Public demonstrate a less than reverential attitude towards Peking. Last week I was chatting with Albert Cheng, the king of the talk shows, who revealed the secret of his survival. According to the scrupulously inquisitive Mr Cheng, Jimmy Chee-hwa, the Chief Executive, needs him around so that when he is criticised for his autocratic ways he can smile and present his democratic credentials by saying "how can you say there's no freedom in Hong Kong with Albert Cheng around".



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Cook bows to Israelis on Har Homa visit

By Eric Silver
in Jerusalem

ROBIN COOK blinked first last night and submitted to Israeli conditions for visiting the contentious Har Homa site in Arab East Jerusalem, where Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government plans to build 6,000 Jewish homes.

After a protracted diplomatic poker game, the Foreign Secretary agreed to visit the wooded hillside between Jerusalem and Bethlehem accompanied by an Israeli official, who will put Israel's case for the project and for sovereign control of the disputed holy city.

Mr Cook had planned earlier to go to Har Homa with Faisal Husseini, a high ranking Palestinian official in Jerusalem. He will now meet Mr Husseini and other Palestinian figures in an Arab university building in East Jerusalem.

The Har Homa tour, which is part of a 24-hour visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories, had threatened to undermine British and European hopes of playing a wider role in the Middle East peace process.

A senior Israeli diplomat had warned Mr Cook that his visit to the settlement would precipitate a major crisis, even without Mr Husseini. "Without Israel," the official said, "they [the Europeans] cannot play a role. It takes two to tango."

Britain is currently the European Union's rotating president and Mr Cook is visiting Israel in the name of all 15 member states.

The nearest to an Israeli concession last night was that the Foreign Secretary will



Ministry official complained yesterday.

"We don't inspect our friends. The Europeans may or may not recognise Israeli sovereignty, but as long as the issue is not resolved they should not come with prejudicial views." Mr Netanyahu's media adviser, David Bar-Ilan, suggested it would be like an Israeli minister visiting Northern Ireland as a guest of Sinn Féin.

Israeli officials also complained that Mr Cook had decided to drop a visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial - a staple for visiting dignitaries - from his itinerary.

Israel says it would welcome a European contribution to the Israeli-Palestinian process and to Israel's quest for a way to withdraw troops from southern Lebanon without endangering its northern border. But Israel insists the parties must negotiate their own terms. "We don't expect mediators to teach each side what to do," the senior diplomat said.

Israel fears a European peace formula would become the Palestinian base line. "When people negotiate," the official argued, "both sides have to meet each other half way. If the Europeans come with set ideas of what the outcome should be, the Palestinians cannot ask for less."

In London, a spokesman for Tony Blair said the Prime Minister stood behind Mr Cook's decision to visit the disputed area.

Following talks in Jordan this morning, Mr Cook will fly to meetings with Mr Arafat in Gaza, with Palestinian officials in East Jerusalem, and Mr Netanyahu on the Israeli side of town. He will discuss the Lebanese issue with the Israeli Defence Minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, before continuing to Damascus and Beirut.



Atal Behari Vajpayee, the new Prime Minister of India, greeting his supporters in New Delhi yesterday Photograph AP

Hindu nationalists celebrate poll victory - but for how long?

By Peter Popham
in Delhi

THE HINDU nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) yesterday celebrated its victory in India's general election with sweetmeats, garlands, drums and serpentine trumpets.

After a week of tense talks and brinkmanship by a crucial ally, the party's parliamentary leader, Atal Behari Vajpayee, was finally able to show President Narayanan written proof that his party was close enough to having a majority to have a good chance of winning the inevitable vote of confidence.

The new government will be sworn in on Thursday. President Narayanan has asked Mr Vajpayee to prove his parliamentary majority within 10 days.

While the BJP celebrated, its deadly rival, the Congress party, took a giant step into the unknown when it elected Sonia Gandhi to the chairmanship of its parliamentary party. This followed her election to the party's presidency on Saturday, when her elderly predecessor,

Sitaram Kesri, was ejected in a palace coup. Mrs Gandhi is thus confirmed as Congress's absolute leader. Should Mr Vajpayee stumble and fall, she is now the official alternative.

After three prime ministers in less than two years - Mr Vajpayee having been one of them, for less than a fortnight - India is in dire need of stable government. The momentum of economic reform, started six years ago, has almost ground to a halt. Economic growth is expected to slow from 7.5 per cent last year to around 5 per cent.

But although stability was the BJP's campaign promise, it is unlikely to provide it. It will govern with the support of 21 allied partners and independents, all of whom will need to be appeased and humoured for the government to stay afloat.

Jayalalitha, the South Indian populist leader with an uncanny resemblance to Queen Victoria, who gave the BJP palpitations over the weekend when she failed to send her promised letter of support, is a sign of trouble ahead. Observers

will not be surprised if the government falls within months.

Mr Vajpayee and his colleagues have already had to put off implementing central BJP ideas, such as building a giant Hindu temple in Ayodhya on the site of the mosque destroyed by a mob in 1992, and the enactment of a uniform civil code, eliminating the discretionary treatment of religious minorities in areas such as marriage and divorce. The party's controversial "re-evaluation" of India's nuclear policy is likely to be long drawn out.

The BJP's long-term dilemma is that it rose to prominence as the party with a panacea for Hindu grievances. But to attain power, to win over the Muslim vote, for example, it has had to abandon almost everything that made it distinctive. What remains is an obligation to reward big-business supporters, by offering protection against foreign competition, and its support among small businesses by getting bureaucracy off their backs. The government will also talk tough with Pakistan on Kashmir.

South African official held over gun deal

SOUTH AFRICA'S safety and security minister, Sydney Mufamadi, flew to Maputo yesterday seeking answers to a question preoccupying the nation - what was a foreign affairs official, Robert McBride, up to when he was arrested in Mozambique with a pile of AK47 rifles and \$11,000 (£6,600) in his pocket?

Mr McBride, 34, the Foreign Ministry's Asia desk director, is in a Mozambique jail after being arrested in the border village of Ressano Garcia a week ago while trying to escape back across the border.

His involvement in what has all the hallmarks of a gun-running operation is a huge diplomatic embarrassment for South Africa. It has sparked a wave of conspiracy theories which have Mr McBride procuring arms for groups including the IRA and East Timorese rebels.

The arrest of any senior official in these circumstances would cause an outcry. In Mr McBride's case, reaction is accentuated by his controversial past.

In 1986, Mr McBride, a coloured (mixed race) member of the African National Congress's military wing, planted a bomb on a crowded beachfront in Durban. His target was the Magoo Bar, which he believed was frequented by soldiers and police and was, therefore, a legitimate military target. But

Mozambique arrests ANC man, writes Mary Braid in Johannesburg

when the bomb - 100lb of explosives surrounded by bullets and shrapnel - exploded, it killed three women and scores of civilians. The liberation battle had ventured out of the townships to the doorsteps of South African whites.

Mr McBride was caught and sentenced to death. While waiting to be hanged, he married his lawyer, Paula McBride, who was not only white but the daughter of a director of Anglo American, South Africa's mightiest corporation.

In 1992, Mr McBride was released in the political horse-trading between the National Party and the unbanned ANC. Whites who continued to regard him as a murderer were incensed again when, after the 1994 elections, he took up a job in the department of foreign affairs.

President Nelson Mandela's government is now distancing itself from Mr McBride. Yesterday Mr Mufamadi, accompanied by George Fivaz, the National Police Commissioner, and Billy Maserla, director gen-

eral of the SA Secret Service, made it clear that they were not going to Mozambique to lobby on Mr McBride's behalf.

South African intelligence agencies have dismissed suggestions that Mr McBride was on a secret mission to ferret out former ANC guerrillas thought to be responsible for a recent spate of highway heists.

Mozambican police have said they believe Mr McBride was involved in straightforward gun-running. Mrs McBride yesterday challenged portrayals of her husband as a perpetual revolutionary, secretly fighting for a foreign cause now the war at home was over. She admitted that Gerry Kelly, a leading Sinn Féin member, and his family had stayed at the McBride home in January but said links had been established because of Sinn Féin's interest in South Africa's peaceful transition to democracy. Newspaper reports of IRA gunrunning, she insisted, were "laughable". Mr McBride had simply been on a fact-finding trip in preparation for a conference on gun and drug smuggling.

Mrs McBride said her husband was a man of principle, not a criminal. Those for whom he will forever be the Magoo Bar bomber are hoping that his detention is just the start of a lengthy - and long overdue - sentence.

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Cellnet Traffic Line tells you when there's traffic ahead.

(Sorry Damon, it only works on roads.)

Cellnet's remarkable new Traffic Line, a collaboration with Trafficmaster, can help you avoid the stress of motorway snarl-ups.

Sensors on the motorway pinpoint the location of the jams, and a special in-car unit pinpoints the location of your car.

If you are heading towards a hold-up, the unit alerts you with a beep. You then call 1200 - on a hands-free digital phone - for a report on the length and position of the jam.

The full kit, including a hands-free mobile phone, costs from just £29.99 from the dealers listed below.

If you're already a Cellnet digital customer, you can buy the unit separately.

Unfortunately for Damon, Cellnet Traffic Line doesn't work on Grand Prix circuits. But at least it should help him get to the racetrack on time.

Available from The Link, Dixons, DX Communications, Carphone Warehouse, The Mobile Phone Shop, BT Communication Centres and other leading outlets.



For details on how to get this service call 0800 21 4000

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Power balance in French regions swings towards National Front

RARELY can an election have produced such a jumble of unfinished sums, conflicting signals and moral dilemmas. The result of Sunday's regional poll in France was, quite simply, a mess. There were outright majorities in just two of the 21 regions in mainland France. In four regions the outcome was utterly opaque, dependant on the whims of fringe candidates.

More menacingly, the far-right National Front was left with the potential balance of power in 19 of the

Local pacts hold the key to control after muddled campaigns left all parties disappointed, reports John Lichfield in Paris

21 regional assemblies. The leaders of the centre-right parties insisted again yesterday that they would make no deals with the National Front to form regional governments when the assemblies meet on Friday. In at least two regions, however, local leaders of the "traditional" right are suspected of taking a more flexible view of Jean-Marie Le Pen's anti-immigrant, anti-European and

anti-American party. If they make local pacts with the Front, it could set a precedent with unpredictable consequences for French politics in the next few years.

In a sense, it was an election which no-one won. Lionel Jospin's Socialist-Communist-Green coalition did less well than expected, but may yet claim 12 or 13 regional governments. The centre-right performed

badly, but did not suffer a whitewash. The National Front scored 15.2 per cent, its highest-ever national total, but only fractionally more than it scored in parliamentary and presidential elections in 1997 and 1995. On a very low turn-out (60 per cent) the Front would have hoped to do better. It fell short of the target of 300 regional seats set by Mr Le Pen and did not top the poll in

any region, though it came close in the Provence-riviera region.

NF leaders yesterday invited the "traditional" right to discuss tactical or permanent alliances to keep the left-of-centre parties from forming minority regional governments on Friday covering more than half of France. Leaders of both the Gaullist RPR and the centre-right UDF dismissed all possibility of deal-making.

The former RPR minister, Eric Raoult, warned his own grass-roots: "If they cross the yellow line, the yellow line of the Republic, and of democracy, they will no longer be on our team." In Languedoc-Roussillon, however, the UDF regional president, Jacques Blanc, said there would be no "written" deals with the NF but he was ready to treat all elected councillors "equally". Sunday's re-

sult, following defeat in the parliamentary election last year, confirms the bankruptcy of the respectable right in France - out of ideas, out of energy, lacking convincing new faces.

The Gaullist former Prime minister, Edouard Balladur, said it was time for the disparate parties to merge in one French conservative and liberal party. This is an old idea and a non-starter. Few of the existing party chiefs are ready to work under a single leader, even if one could be found.

Vatican paints a Holocaust whitewash

By Andrew Gumbel
in Rome

AFTER 11 years of deliberation, the Roman Catholic church released its long-awaited pronouncement on the Holocaust yesterday as an "act of repentance" for the failings of the Catholic world to stand up to the massacre of 6 million Jews during the Second World War.

But the 14-page document, entitled *We Remember: A Reflection On The Shoah*, turned out to be a whitewash of the Vatican and the church hierarchies which barely acknowledged the church of Rome's long history of anti-Semitism.

The document, put together by the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with Jews, vigorously defended Pius XII, the wartime pope much criticised by historians for his refusal to make any public criticism of Nazi Germany. It suggested anti-Semitism was contrary to "the constant teaching of the church", and put the

the institutionalised anti-Semitism of the church of Rome, stretching back to the Council of Nicea in 325, when Jews were deemed "abhorrent to the will of God", or such episodes as the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 and the beatification of dozens of celebrated Jew-haters in the Middle Ages.

And there was no suggestion that any church official might have turned a blind eye to the horrors of Nazism, or even quietly condoned it. The document spoke only of the "many Catholic bishops, priests, religious and laity" who helped to save Jewish lives.

It added: "Nevertheless... the spiritual resistance and concrete action of other Christians was not that which might have been expected from Christ's followers. We cannot know how many Christians in countries occupied or ruled by the Nazi powers... were horrified at the disappearance of their Jewish neighbours and yet were not strong enough to raise their voices in protest... We deeply regret the errors and failures of those sons and daughters of the church."

Most controversial, perhaps, was the document's attitude to Pius XII, lionised for his covert action "to save hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives". Many Jews, as well as liberals inside and outside the church, have never forgiven Pius for his failure to speak out in public, arguing that he had a pro-German bias (he was Papal nuncio to Germany during the First World War). He failed to prevent the deportation of Roman Jews, who had lived under the direct protection of the Pope for centuries. His policy was diametrically opposed to that of his predecessor, Pius XI, who wrote an encyclical critical of the Nazis, "Mit brennender Sorge" in 1938, and was preparing an even stronger statement on his deathbed, which was hidden from public view until after Pius XII's death in 1958.

The Vatican has always argued that Pius had no choice - that to oppose the Nazis would have spelled the destruction of the German church. It has never satisfactorily explained, however, why the Church under Pius XII protected Nazis on the run after the war, nor how Pius managed to be such an outspoken critic of the Soviet bloc in the 1950s, when the Nazis inspired no more than generalised comments about Christian values.



Ethnic Albanian women taking bread from Pristina to the Drenica region in a symbolic gesture against the Serb blockade of the area and as a protest against the recent killings in the area of scores of ethnic Albanians, including children, by Serbian forces. Photograph: Reuters

Firefight ends bid to free Britons

By Phil Reeves in Moscow
and Steve Crawshaw in London

THE horror of captivity was set to continue for two British hostages in Chechnya after a team of commandos ran into a lethal firefight on their way to rescue them, according to Russian news reports last night.

The operation, launched in the early hours yesterday by Chechen special services, was called off after the hostage-takers threatened to kill the Britons, sources told the Interfax news agency. By then, one commando and one of the kidnappers had died in a burst of fighting, and several others were injured.

The Foreign Office insisted that there was no evidence that the Britons were the subject of the rescue mission. A senior Chechen official said that the nationality of the hostages was unknown. Russian news agencies all reported that the hostages were the two missing Britons, Camilla Carr, 40, and Jon James, 37.

The failed mission came only a day after Aslan Maskhadov, the President of the chaotic Caucasus republic, returned home after a four-day trip to Britain in which he met Foreign Office officials to discuss the fate of the two aid workers. The President has repeatedly pledged to free the

hostages, who are among scores caught up in an epidemic of abductions that began in earnest after the Chechen war ended in mid-1996.

A group from the Chechen anti-terrorist squad came under fire after setting off for the small town of Urus-Martan, when they discovered that the hostages were held there. General Khunkarpasha Israpilov, chief of the Chechen anti-terrorist centre, told reporters that his team had been able to confirm the abductors not only hold the Britons, but also Chechens and one Ossetian. The rescue fighters "gave up the plan for eliminating the terrorists, realising the hostages' lives

were in danger," he said. He added he was confident of securing their release "in the near future". Meanwhile, in Grozny, the capital, officials raided an apartment block and arrested three people suspected of being involved in the hostage-taking. The couple were abducted by six masked gunmen last July after arriving in Grozny to help children traumatised by the war with Moscow.

Mr Maskhadov met Baroness Thatcher during his visit, and returned boasting that she had agreed to make a trip to Chechnya. That claim was denied by her spokesman, who suggested a misunderstanding in translation may have been to blame.

During Mr Maskhadov's visit, Lady Thatcher emphasised at length the importance of releasing hostages for any progress on relations between Britain and Chechnya.

In this respect, the former prime minister was remarkably on-message: the Foreign Office followed up with the same message as Lady Thatcher.

The families of the aid workers met Mr Maskhadov last week. Camilla Carr's sister, Alexandra Little, said yesterday: "[Maskhadov] spoke from the heart. They know that they can't rebuild their country and have foreign investment while this is going on."

Tiananmen hard man elected to lead parliament

By Teresa Poole
in Peking

LI PENG, the man who imposed martial law on Peking during the spring 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations, was yesterday elected head of China's Parliament, after an embarrassing 11 per cent of delegates failed to support his appointment. His election by the rubber-stamp National Party Congress (NPC) was no surprise - there was only one candidate.

Although the vote for Li Peng, 69, was much less

favourable than the resounding 98 per cent in favour of Jiang Zemin's re-election as president, he may well have been relieved. In recent years, the NPC has become more strident in voicing dissatisfaction. Support for one vote last year dropped as low as 60 per cent. It was thought the protest vote against the headline Mr Li would be higher than it turned out.

The assembly this week is putting in place the government that will lead China into the 21st century. Unlike in recent years, foreign journalists were not al-

lowed to watch the voting in the Great Hall of the People, but were provided with the results in a separate room.

Under the constitution, Mr Li had to step down as prime minister after completing two full terms. He will retain his number two ranking in the Chinese leadership. Zhu Rongji, 69, will today be confirmed as China's new prime minister.

In a separate election, Hu Jintao, 55, was appointed China's vice president. This signals Mr Hu as the heir apparent to Mr Jiang, and designates him -

for the time being - as the man to head the next generation of Chinese leaders. Mr Hu made his political name as party secretary of Tibet, a job in which he was seen as a conservative rather than a reformer.

Analysts are weighing up how Mr Li's appointment may affect the political development of the NPC, which under the outgoing Qiao Shi, 73, had begun to take on a more robust defence of the "rule of law". Mr Qiao was unceremoniously ousted from his senior party positions last autumn, supposedly because of his

age, but in reality because of a rift with Mr Jiang.

Mr Li would not normally be thought of as the right man to further the development of China's parliamentary system, though he will need to boost the NPC if it is to act as a power-base for him. But, as a man who has built his career on unquestioning belief in the absolute power of the Communist Party, his vision of how the NPC should evolve is unlikely to give cause for hope to those who want to see political reform in China.

My Lai dead are honoured

Relatives and survivors of the 1968 My Lai massacre marked the anniversary of the slaughter of 500 civilians by US soldiers. Wreaths were placed at a monument to the victims and two US veterans who tried to halt the bloodbath urged that it never be forgotten. "Something terrible happened 30 years ago today," ex-helicopter pilot Hugh Thompson said. This month he was one of two men awarded the Soldier's Medal in Washington for their actions at My Lai.

— Reuters, My Lai, Vietnam

Veteran leads Armenia poll

As Armenians voted for a president yesterday, the Soviet-era Communist leader, Karen Demirchian, led in most opinion polls, ahead of the Prime Minister, Robert Kocharian, the acting president, and former prime minister Vazgen Manukyan. A second round will be needed in two weeks if no one gains outright victory. Levon Ter Petrosian resigned last month over concessions he offered the Azeris to end a conflict over the Nagorno Karabakh region.

— Reuters, Yerevan

Rare parrot chips in

A kakapo chick hatched with human help in New Zealand, fuelling hopes for the species' survival. It brought to 57 the known population of the kakapo, a fat, flightless parrot. The egg was put in an incubator, where the chick struggled to chip out at the weekend.

— Reuters, Wellington

Shevardnadze hits at Moscow

President Eduard Shevardnadze criticised Russia for failing to extradite a man suspected of trying to kill him. He was referring to Igor Giorgadze, Georgia's former security chief, who fled to Moscow after Georgian officials charged him with organising a 1995 bombing of Mr Shevardnadze's motorcade. He has faced two assassination attempts in Georgia over the past three years.

— AP, Tbilisi

Murder trial a bit of a drag

One of Greece's best-known folk musicians went on trial accused of murdering his daughter's married boyfriend. Akis Panou, 64, fired into the face of Sotiris Yalamas, 29, in August in the village of Lefki. Yalamas died instantly in front of Panou and his daughter, pregnant with Yalamas's child. Mr Panou said his daughter's relationship with a married man shamed the family. He was well known for the song "My life is just one cigarette that I don't like, but drag away at."

— AP, Kavala



What would you give to own a Vectis APS zoom compact from Minolta? How about £129.99?

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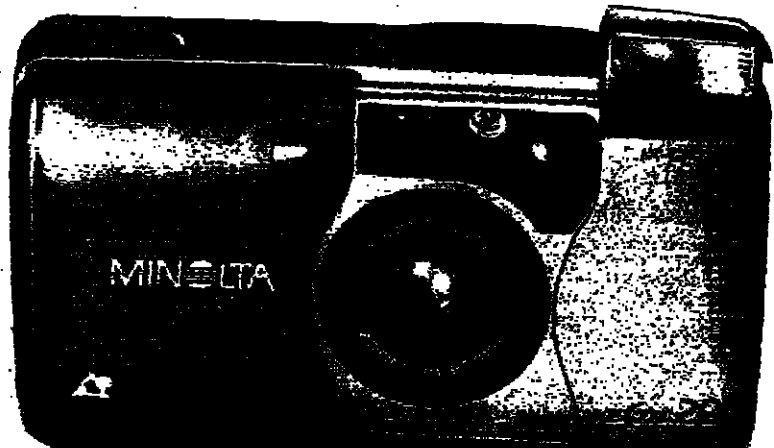
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A very private obsession

Sarah Speir, who has suffered secretly from a compulsive disorder, explains how she was able to unburden herself

I DON'T know what to make of things just now. Confusion reigns triumphant. Things had never really been going well and the farewell party for my sister seemed to top it all off.

I'd had a hard time getting my hands clean before the party started. I have a problem with hygiene in that I wash my hands a lot. Most of the time I'm okay, but something triggered me off and no amount of ritualised routine was going to convince me I was sterile.

My family know about my problem and are really good about it, but they were busy greeting guests while I hid upstairs waiting for someone to come and find me. So it was attention-seeking, but sometimes you need sympathy showered on you. My mum did come looking, but never found me. Realising it was a lost cause and that there were now too many guests who didn't know about my wee problem, I did a bit and went to see Sally, my best friend.

She breezily asked why I was stopping her tidying spree when my voice faltered on reply. Continuing to wring my hands I explained that I couldn't get them clean and instinctively brought my shoulders in to encompass my quaking stance. I hated myself for crying, but also knew that Sally was the best person to console me. True to form she appeared with a Mr Men paper towel to dry my eyes.

We went back to my place, and made polite conversation with my parents' friends while Sally enquired as to my boyfriend's whereabouts. He was late as usual and to be honest I was glad as I was finding the relationship difficult.

You see, I'd had this hygiene problem since I was about 13 and never thought I would find anyone who would understand the constraints it made on a relationship. When I met my boyfriend I didn't think he would understand either and decided not to tell him until absolutely necessary. The time came after a particularly full-on petting session when I failed to return from the bathroom. Amazingly we got through it and together we took on the illness for what it was. But now I was confused over my feelings for my boyfriend, feeling that perhaps I loved him as a friend rather than a boyfriend. I was also trying to silence a nagging thought: Was I staying with him because I believed that there couldn't be anyone else who would understand my worries? Throughout my illness, the focus of my worries revolved around not wanting to hurt anyone. That's why I washed my hands - so I wouldn't pass some horrendous unknown disease to people.

When the phone rang I was so relieved he was all right. Then I asked what was keeping him.

My relief turned into shocked silence as he calmly told me he'd met someone and wanted to end the relationship. I put down the phone and headed back upstairs to my earlier hideout. For the second time that day I broke into tears, surprising myself at the pain that flowed out of these ones.

Meanwhile, the party appeared to be in full swing, with my mother's dulcet tones slaughtering "California Dreaming". Try as I might I couldn't hide in there for ever, so I headed for the bathroom to freshen up.

Pushing open the door I encountered Dave pitiously hugging the toilet.

"Oh sorry."

"Oh, hi, I feel sick," he declared in his usual monotonous tone.

"How much have you had to drink?"

"Don't know."

"Mind if I freshen up?"

"No, go ahead."

I studied my reflection. My cheeks were red but my eyes were okay. I ran the water. My palms welcomed the moisture. You would never have guessed my hands were only 20 years old - they looked at least 60, gnarled and wrinkled as if I had been a fisherman in a past life.

I'd unconsciously begun the routine I follow when washing my hands. I find myself doing that sometimes, mostly after a particularly disturbing dream involving some hygiene epic. That's why I'm jokingly referred to as Lady Macbeth in my family. I didn't know how long Dave had been watching me for or in fact how long it had been since I came in - tonight was all muddled up. Time meant nothing.

Turning off the tap, I wiped my hands on my jumper. Forces of habit, after a bad spell on the question of the cleanliness of towels. I knelt down beside Dave and playfully tugged his shirt. "Hey wet hands, nobody ever teach you to use a towel?" I sat down, happy to find my niche. I'd always felt okay around him - there was something about his laid-back attitude to life that put me at ease.

The Swinging Sixties floated through the open window.

We'd reached Gerry and the Pacemakers when Dave retched.

I filled a beaker of water for him. "At least you got to the toilet," I said.

"Sorry."

Then he said: "I remember another time. The door was ajar and the tap was running. I went to turn it off when I heard crying. I saw you with soap all over your hands and about half way up your arms. I went back to the hall and waited to see if you were all right only you took ages and when you did come out you were drying your hands on your jersey just like you did tonight."



An affliction of the mind: Sarah Speir, who has felt compelled to wash excessively for seven years

Photograph: Colin McPherson

Sally came in and started rubbing your back as if to say "are you okay", all the time rubbing the soap off. It was then that I realised that Sally knew something I didn't and that you weren't happy."

I looked down at my feet. That was the most I'd ever heard Dave say at one time and the topic was the worst he could have chosen. Both of us were clearly embarrassed. We could have been love-struck teenagers on a first date awaiting the next move.

"I never realised. That was two years ago. Why haven't you said anything?"

"Say what? Why do you cry when you wash your hands then not use a towel? I figured you didn't want anyone to know, well, apart from Sally."

My ring was jammed on my knuckle now - no amount of

twisting was helping. I'd only over told a few people of my problem and there was so much to consider when you did let them in. Would they treat you differently, act embarrassed around you or even tell others? I couldn't believe he'd seen me that night. Usually I'm good at hiding it. It's a recognised fact that people with my condition - obsessive compulsive disorder - are really good at keeping their illness from others.

A button on my cuff had come loose and was straining to be free from its threaded leash. "They think they're dirty all the time," I said. The button flew off, landing between us, the cheese in the mousetrap. "Found out my secret then?" I let my fringe hide my eyes.

For the third time that night, I was reduced to tears. Music from the party enforced the

depth of sadness and I wept words I'd stored only in the recess of my twisted mind.

"Dave, it's just the most horrible thing. I hate it you

Continuing to wring my hands, I explained that I couldn't get them clean

know. Every day. From the moment I get up. Putting my undies on, what if I brushed past there when I was putting them on. I must be dirty - wash my hands. Dry them. What's that

on the towel? You're begging yourself to accept that the brown patch is just dried blood from Brian or dad's razor cut, but that fucking stupid bit won't accept it. It must be shit. Why would that be on the towel - well you do dry yourself when you get out the bath and the shower don't you? There's always another bloody answer, always something to contradict your sane half.

"I hate it, just hate it. I wish, you know, it's just fucked up so much for me. I've missed my teenage years. I'm 20 but I've only experienced life up to about 14. It's so hard going out as you're sure you're still dirty. Terrified you're going to start some epidemic."

"Why couldn't I have something medicine could aid, perhaps even cure? Nobody's got a frigging clue what's going on

in my head. Least of all me. "Do you know what the worst thing is? All I've ever wanted is children. The maternal part of me is crying out to be released. But how is that going to happen, Dave, when any kind of genital secretion sends me to the shower for hours?" My despair was overwhelming.

Dave shuffled over to me. An arm was tentatively placed around my shoulder; a cautious hand gently tugged my head into his chest. For someone who had hated contact of any kind, even from family, he knew he was needed. His flannel shirt soaked up my tears and we sat there together, weary souls listening to Lennon and McCartney drifting from below.

The names of the writer's friends have been changed.

FIGHTING THE FEAR

In *As Good As It Gets*, which opened in Britain last week, Jack Nicholson portrays a man obsessed with cleanliness who fears contact with strangers because of the germs they may be carrying. When the movie reaches Glasgow, Sarah Speir will be in the audience, partly because she is a film buff, and partly because she knows what an obsession with hygiene feels like from the inside.

Since she was 13 she has had a fear of dirt and germs which has driven her to wash her hands dozens, sometimes hundreds, of times a day.

Her parents first became aware of her compulsion when she stopped going out with her friends. After much coaxing, she explained that going into town meant shopping which meant handing over cash. Cash was "dirty" and she feared that she would spread germs and cause infections for which she would be to blame.

The strain on the family has been enormous. Sarah speaks warmly of her parents' support and they pay tribute to her bravery, but both acknowledge that her condition has dominated family life. "When she is down we are all down," her father says.

Sarah did well at school and got a place at university to study speech therapy, but she dropped out after 18 months, unable to take the strain. She is now working as a legal secretary in Edinburgh and hopes to go back to university.

Nobody knows how many sufferers there are from obsessive compulsive disorder because many keep their condition hidden. Estimates vary from one in 100 to one in 1,000. Its cause is not understood, although there is thought to be a strong genetic factor, but it is one of the most readily treatable conditions with behaviour therapy.

Sarah, who has been on anti-depressants for most of her adolescence, has been receiving therapy for the past four months, after years in which she refused help. It involves exercises in aversion therapy - being required to go out to the shops without washing her hands - tasks she finds very difficult but which, over time, should break down her compulsion. "I have minor upsets every now and then. But I am getting better," she says.

Jeremy Laurance

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DR PHIL HAMMOND

"THE TROUBLE with you is that you're not one of us any more - you're one of them." As criticism goes, I've had worse. "Smug self-satisfied medical tosser" (Anon, *Edinburgh Festival Times*) and "unimpressive biceps... makes you yearn to administer a lethal injection" (Cristina Odone, *Daily Telegraph*) are my favourites. But when it comes from someone you respect it does tend to hit home. The critic in question is a GP who was

commenting on a *Trust Me*, I'm a Doctor feature exposing the fact that amniocentesis - the withdrawal through a needle of fluid surrounding an embryo for screening tests - is still being done in some centres in the UK without continuous ultrasound guidance. Without ultrasound you can never be sure where the needle will end up and it doesn't take a genius to figure out what might happen if it hits the placenta or baby.

"I'm not saying it doesn't happen," said Dr X (who wishes to remain that way) "but I'm just not sure whether any good will come of exposing it. You know as well as I do that the NHS is run on a shoestring budget and a consequence of that is the very patchy quality of the service. Whatever operation or procedure you care to name, some places do it well and some places do it badly. It's always been that way and it'll remain so without a substantial input of resources into medical training and manpower. The only thing that's changed is that programmes like yours are making the public think that instead of being thankful for whatever the NHS gives them,

they have a right to expect that whoever they see is up to date and competent. It's a nice sentiment but a million miles away from reality. So all you're doing is increasing public expectation beyond what the service can deliver and making it even tougher for doctors."

I was about to launch into a vigorous defence when I spotted another old colleague. Well not that old actually - she'd been an obstetric registrar when I was a senior house officer - but she's finally become a consultant and she looked bloody ancient. She was and still is a brilliant obstetrician, so why was she finding it so tough? "Litigation. I've got an in-tray this big with complaints going back 10 years. The sad thing is that I know that in nearly every case nothing negligent happened. On one occasion, a junior doctor made a mistake but even then she was doing her best given the conditions and I don't think it affected the outcome. But people expect you to get it right first time, every time and they think medical science has miraculous solutions to everything. I love the work but if anything drives me away

from it, it'll be the lawyers."

I spent a day or so feeling sorry for obstetricians until Sacha Bayestock, the series producer on *Trust Me*, told me of a phone call she'd received from a woman who'd had a "blind" amniocentesis done in Manchester. The obstetrician didn't even speak to her, stuck the needle in three times without ultrasound guidance, drew blood on each occasion, gave up and walked out. Not only does it risk causing miscarriage, but the baby may survive with brain damage. Oxford pathologist Wayne Squire has studied the brains of a number of (now deceased) children with severe brain injury at birth who'd had amniocentesis and can date the time of the injury to the time of the procedure. In addition, the babies had puncture marks in their skulls. The tragedy is that continuous ultrasound guidance has been available for 10 years and when used properly, the chances of hitting the baby during amniocentesis are very much reduced. The Royal College of Obstetricians insists continuous monitoring must be used but some obstetricians either don't bother or

haven't been trained. Time to stop feeling sorry for doctors.

I have mixed emotions and divided loyalties about medicine every time we film *Trust Me*. Doctors are under enough pressure without the glare of the media but the General Medical Council and Royal Colleges alone just don't seem to have the teeth to sort out the problems of incompetence. For all the patchy quality procedures we've exposed (breast cancer surgery, cleft lip and palate repair, hip replacements and now amnio) the doctors who are doing it well always give patients the same advice. Ask the person who's doing it how often they do it, whether they're following established guidelines and what results they get. It's a sad reflection on the state of medical training if patients have to check that their doctor is doing the job properly and I've never yet met a patient who's had the balls to do it. But most doctors are competent and should not be threatened by the request, and it's currently your best chance of avoiding a bodger. As a surgeon once said to me "blind trust in anyone is a risky business."

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Tudors go to our heads

The history of Henry VIII and his heirs, like that of the Windsors, was a soap opera with the quality of Greek myth. And we can't get enough of it. By Jack O'Sullivan

YOU might think that the idea of chaps in doublet and hose, stiff ruff necks and big floppy head gear finally sank with the Spanish Armada. But who knows these days? The Tudors are suddenly hip and the fashion folk are on the case. Vivienne Westwood has taken to dressing up as Elizabeth I and Isabella Blow, self-styled muse of the Cool Britannia designers, is urging her protégés, Philip Treacy and Alexander McQueen, to think half-Timbered.

Meanwhile, in political circles, the talk is oh so Tudor, of Britain as once again a buccannering, enterprising state, unencumbered by empire, a country of Francis Drakes, a nation casting aside stuffy old ways in favour of storming off confidently into modernity.

And, of course, the royal parallels are clear enough. The dilemmas of Prince Charles and Camilla Parker Bowles would have been well understood in Henry VIII's day, when a king had occasionally to dump a wife or two. The House of Tudor, like the Windsors, provided an extraordinary supply of family dramas, soap operas which had the quality of Greek myth.

The speaker is: David Starkey, LSE historian, whose three-part Channel 4 series on the life of Henry began on Sunday. In making his documentary, Dr Starkey apparently has a problem. There is not much visual material, apart from a few Holbeins, to work from. But that does not bother him. Each time some fresh twist in the Tudor drama unfolds, he need only zoom in on the present royal family or to-

day's politicians to find an illustration of history repeating itself. "What has happened in recent years is exactly the same," says Starkey, "except that Diana and Sarah did not have their heads cut off."

He is not alone. Others fascinated by the Tudors include the makers of a forthcoming film focusing on the love life of Elizabeth I which has sparked a debate on whether she was in fact a virgin. Maria Perry, the actress and historian, who has published a book on the tumultuous lives of Henry's sisters (one married three after two divorces) and Peter Ackroyd, whose new work explores the rise and fall of Henry's right-hand man, Thomas More.

Lord Irvine behaves with the arrogance and extravagance that led to the demise of Henry's Lord Chancellor, Thomas Wolsey. And, of course, a scene from Elizabeth's court, in the style of *Blackadder II* (currently being repeated) is being used in an advert for Hootie Hoops.

It is tempting to point out, in the face of all this interest, that the Tudors have been reinvented. It was, after all, something of a golden age which saw the flowering of the English language. Charles Laughton established his career on the strength of his Oscar-winning performance in the 1934 movie, *The Private Life of Henry VIII*. Glenda Jackson may end up as Mayor of London on the basis of her stern performance as Elizabeth I in the Seventies BBC dramatisation of her reign.

Starkey acknowledges that the era has had near universal appeal. "Henry VIII," he says, "has genuinely mythic status."

He has become the English Bluebeard. The best stories about the Tudors call for and stand endless repetition. But the period seems to have a particular resonance today. "Partly it is because it was an age of great portraiture and pageantry, when, like today, so much attention was paid to visual image," says Maria Perry. She recalls a lavish event in 1520, known as the Field of the Cloth of Gold, when fountains flowed with claret in a massive display of wealth designed to impress Francis I of France when he met Henry VIII to talk peace. It was the type of event, branding England as rich and powerful, of which Peter Mandelson would have been proud.

Starkey also sees the Tudor period as offering vital insights into what post-imperial Britain should aspire to. "We are now," he says, "in exactly the same position as in Henry's day. We are top of the European second division. Then Henry created the Eurosceptic nation by cutting England off from the European Catholic church and creating the Church of England. He established a sense that the nation was God's vehicle on earth. And the Elizabethan period became a time of great exploration throughout the world."

"Blair threatens to destroy the changes Henry made in return for a future in Europe that nobody understands. He is going against the grain of 500 years."



Elizabethan extravaganza: Vivienne Westwood in 'Five Centuries ago' dress Photograph: Gian Paolo Barbieri

There is, in short, an intellectual battle going over the Tudor legacy, with Blair's people claiming to be the true believers. Mark Leonard, whose work for Demos on rebranding Britain has been a key influence on the Government, argues that the Tudor period demonstrated qualities of nationhood which the present government is now pursuing.

Leonard, author of *Britain - Renewing Our Identity*, rejects Starkey's image of Henry as founder of the Eurosceptics. "His marriages were designed to create alliances with European countries. He led an international lifestyle. The heroes of the period such as Shakespeare were internationally minded. And Henry could speak several languages. He was a quintessential European."

Also in the last six months, because my mix albums have been phenomenally successful, selling 700,000 copies, which is more than anything else in my genre has ever sold, I've been asked what I should do with myself. All these doors are being opened that I haven't gone knocking on. Perhaps it's a flaw in my character that I'm not more ambitious to do bigger and better things.

I'm both excited and scared.

Half of me thinks this is a young person's business and I'm an old bastard, 37, much older than the average age of my club-going audience, who are somewhere between 18 and 25. I always wanted to go out at the top and do something sensible instead. Maybe I should grow up. Yet the other side says nobody has ever got old being a club DJ before - there's no red card yet and I'm not being ordered off stage. At the moment it's too exciting and personally challenging to quit. I'm the equivalent of Alan Shearer in the DJ world - so the money is good too!

My show has grown immensely in popularity, without sounding too conceited, it has attracted some cultural significance for young people because so many live for the weekend.

With the new era of Britism I've been selling the BBC programmes, so I'm behind getting a lot of my so-called competitors, like Judge Jules and Tim Westwood, on to Radio 1.

I've gone from underground to massively overground and now attend John Birt's cocktail parties. I'm quite interested in television next, with the expansion of digital, cable and satellite, there are lots of opportunities. Nobody with my knowledge has been given the challenge of putting club culture on to the box. Nothing has worked before because it's always been done by TV people who know nothing about clubbing.

Pete Tong is on Radio 1 - Friday nights between 6pm and 9pm. Interview by Andrew G Marshall

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The subjects still object to Queen Camilla

TIME to cast our minds back to last July. Photographers outside Highgrove, the private residence of Prince Charles and the venue for a party celebrating the 50th birthday of Camilla Parker Bowles, are surprised to find special facilities have been laid on. There's to be none of the usual scrumming. "If you want to see the main shot, boys, just stay here," the helpful police inspector tells them. It was almost unheard of.

They are more surprises when the main shot approaches, in the form of a Ford Mondeo carrying Mrs Parker Bowles, in a figure-hugging gown. The car slows down to make sure the snappers get a good long look. Around her neck is a diamond and pearl necklace and on her lips is the smile of a woman who senses her time may finally have come.

How long ago it all seems now. At the time, speculation on the subject of a possible marriage between Charles and Camilla was rife. Newspaper polls suggested that public opinion was thawing towards a woman who for some time had played the wicked witch opposite Princess Diana's good fairy.

Later in the summer, the pair were due to go on holiday together; then in September would come their first public outing. This was to be at a £100-a-head charity bash on behalf of the National Osteoporosis Society organised by Mrs Parker Bowles. Her mother died of the disease and she is the society's patron. Not exactly competition for the Queen of Hearts, perhaps, but undoubtedly another significant step on the road to acceptance.

It wasn't to be, of course. In a screech of tyres in a Paris underpass, Camilla was once more consigned to the shadows.

But in recent weeks, Mrs Parker Bowles has found herself back in the headlines. Earlier this month, it was revealed that she has been staying at St James's Palace, Charles's London residence. Now comes the revelation that she had been Charles's guest at a weekend party at Sandringham. According to one source, the couple will soon be seen together in public, probably at a charity function. But she will not host any public events on behalf of the National Osteoporosis Society as previously planned.

The most significant date in the resumed rehabilitation of Mrs Parker Bowles will be 14 November, Charles's 50th birthday, when it is likely that

a party will be held at Windsor Castle. Undoubtedly Charles would wish to have Camilla on his arm, and he will also want his two sons in attendance. William and Harry have not met Camilla since they were small.

So far, all seems to be going well. There was no outpouring of moral outrage at the news that Camilla had been staying at St James's Palace and newspaper polls show that up to 80 per cent of the public feel Charles should be "forgiven" for his treatment of Diana. So who should take the praise for this public relations success?

Step forward, Peter Mandelson. The fact that he was among the 25 VIP guests at Sandringham was hardly a surprise.

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Battle royal: Camilla Parker Bowles and the Prince of Wales



Tim Hulse

'I walked on the dancefloor and I was treated like the messiah'

REVELATIONS: PETE TONG

The time: February 1998
The place: Derby
The man: Pete Tong - DJ

"I'VE ONLY just been coming to terms with the fact that I'm famous. Even though I've been on the radio all my adult life. I started at Radio 1 as a journalist/guest DJ in 1979 so I've transcended generations of clubbers. Up till recently, being on the radio might have made you notorious, but never famous. The DJ as a superstar has been very strange for me, I have to pinch myself. All I do is walk into a club and people go wild. I think: 'it's only me, all I've got is a box of records'".

The intensity of the cult of

personality really hit me last month at a club in Derby; people outside London and the South-east are a little less cynical. Although I'd worked at Progress in Derby in the past, I don't go out on the road very much - especially now that I have a family. So getting me back to places is very difficult, but this year I've returned to people who earlier in my career supported me big time."

When I was finally given my own Radio 1 show, back in 1997, it was the only dance DJ. The other jocks were still just chasing the money and being booked into the chicken and chips clubs on Wednesday nights - like Bruno Brookes and Pete



Powells officers gone by. Although I was really well known, credible and played at all the right places in the South-east, everywhere else, being a Radio 1 DJ, I was not the coolest person. So I'd piloted Derby and actually begged for a gig."

I hadn't seen the owner of Progress for seven years. He got me to meet him in the town centre because the club had moved to a pedestrian walkway and he needed to guide me in. He was amazed by the response: 'I've never seen crowds

like it. Last time you played for me, you couldn't even mix. I don't believe it. I've turned 2,000 people away tonight. It's gonna clear me out, because you're charging a fortune, but I don't mind. Just tell me what you've done.' The truth was that I don't know!"

I entered through the back door of his club, word went through like wildfire, there was an incredible buzz. I walked on the dance floor and I was treated like the messiah! I'm not a pop star and I don't want to be one but that's all I can liken it to. The crowd parted and they wanted to stroke me, shake my hand, kiss me - and it was just as much the boys as the girls. It was stupid and over the top but they were beautiful people and I was really pleased. Even

before I played my first record there was a massive cheer and everybody ran to the front.

It's a funny job - all I'm doing is playing somebody else's records! The adulation is quite uncomfortable, although I'm proud of my ability to entertain, I feel I should be doing more - like juggling."

Also in the last six months, because my mix albums have been phenomenally successful, selling 700,000 copies, which is more than anything else in my genre has ever sold, I've been asked what I should do with myself. All these doors are being opened that I haven't gone knocking on. Perhaps it's a flaw in my character that I'm not more ambitious to do bigger and better things.

I'm both excited and scared.

Half of me thinks this is a young person's business and I'm an old bastard, 37, much older than the average age of my club-going audience, who are somewhere between 18 and 25. I always wanted to go out at the top and do something sensible instead. Maybe I should grow up. Yet the other side says nobody has ever got old being a club DJ before - there's no red card yet and I'm not being ordered off stage. At the moment it's too exciting and personally challenging to quit. I'm the equivalent of Alan Shearer in the DJ world - so the money is good too!

My show has grown immensely in popularity, without sounding too conceited, it has attracted some cultural significance for young people because so many live for the weekend.

With the new era of Britism I've been selling the BBC programmes, so I'm behind getting a lot of my so-called competitors, like Judge Jules and Tim Westwood, on to Radio 1.

I've gone from underground to massively overground and now attend John Birt's cocktail parties. I'm quite interested in television next, with the expansion of digital, cable and satellite, there are lots of opportunities. Nobody with my knowledge has been given the challenge of putting club culture on to the box. Nothing has worked before because it's always been done by TV people who know nothing about clubbing.

Pete Tong is on Radio 1 - Friday nights between 6pm and 9pm. Interview by Andrew G Marshall

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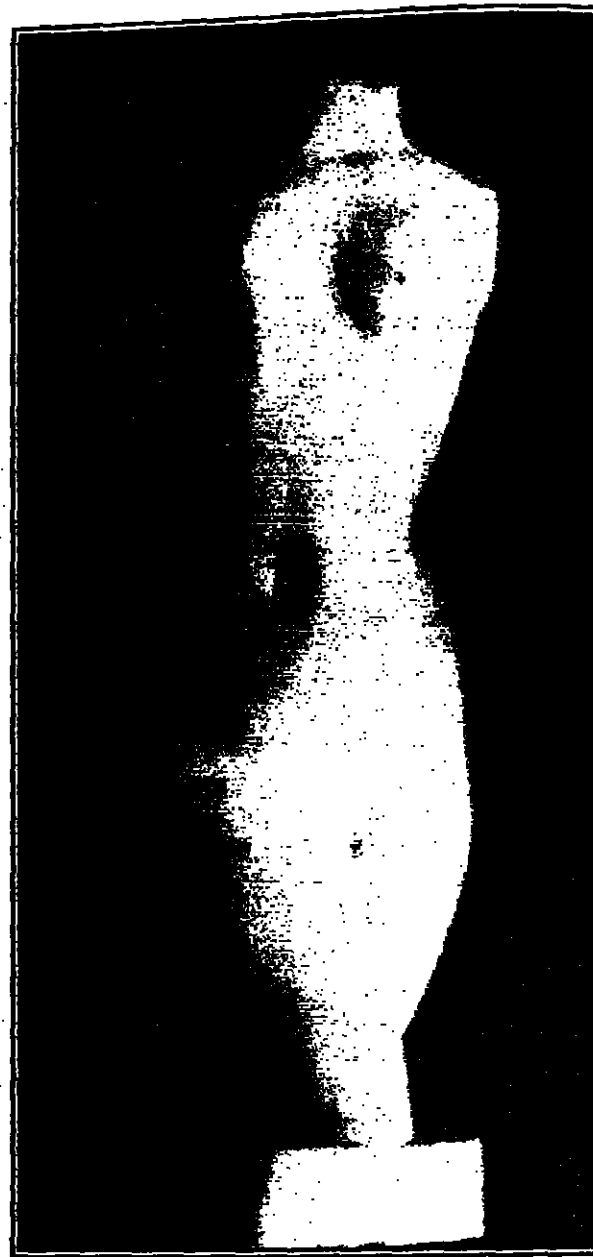
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Evolution: Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's *Torso I*, 1913, Henry Moore's *Woman with Upraised Arms*, 1924-25, Barbara Hepworth's *Torso*, 1928 and Frank Dobson's *Torso*, 1933

Erotic fantasy from the heart of the stones

What goes round comes round, says Tom Lubbock. And in sculpture, what was first put forward in jest soon became the sensual language of the modernists

MODERN art repeats itself, the first time as a joke, the second time in deadly earnest or it often seems that way. So many significant developments begin in incredulous humour, with someone saying: and I'll tell you the next thing they'll do, these artists, if they go on like this, they'll ... Then, later, the preposterous fantasy comes true.

Abstraction and action-painting were both anticipated (by cartoonists and others) years before the real things arrived. And in 1931, four decades ahead of Richard Long, the sculptor Jacob Epstein, said: "There is so much talk now of material that I can foresee, as a logical conclusion, an exhibition of stones."

But the talk that Epstein was reacting to, he'd been involved with himself. "Truth to materials" was a big slogan of English modernist sculpture—meaning, if a sculpture is made of stone, it should respect this fact and not attempt to simulate flesh. "Direct carving" was another: sculptors should be physically involved with their material, and not (as Rodin had done) make models in clay and get craftsmen to remake them in marble. It was a movement that emphasised its hands-on honesty, and Epstein was one of its pioneers. He had himself *affirmed sculpture's identity* with its natural materials, declaring: "I want to carve mountains."

Carving Mountains is the name of the exhibition now showing at Kettle's Yard in Cambridge, devoted to English stone sculpture from 1907-37. It includes work from the first generation of carvers, Epstein, Gaudier-Brzeska and Eric Gill, and from the second, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and her two husbands, John Skeaping and Ben Nicholson.

The sculptures here aren't themselves mountainous. They're small works, some of them tiny. But the survey is very well chosen, and conveys the sheer adventure of getting the chisel out and getting stuck in - taking as one's example not the classical tradition with its straining limbs and heaving muscles, but more primitive and archaic artefacts, self-contained and static figures whose elemental shapes didn't disguise the blocks of stone they were cut from.

A certain purity was the hallmark of this work, and the propaganda encourages us to see if as a back-to-basics and rather high-minded enterprise. But looking at Epstein's *Female Figure* in fienite or Gaudier's *The Limp*, we should recognise too what curious creations they often are – as indeed they appeared to contemporaries (and not only those who thought them

hideous). Carving stones so that they look like stones brings its own particular psychological bias.

The sculptors don't abandon the human body, but the bodies they carve tend to be stout and sturdy, or to coalesce into compact, streamlined, almost shrink-wrapped forms. Surface detail is simplified. There are no extruding limbs. These are ideal bodies, and the ideal they pursue, the thing they really want to be, is a beautiful lump - not just back to basics, but back to the embryo, back to the egg. The *Female Figure* is a paradoxical creature. Its belly is pregnant, but its head is clearly foetal. The *Imp*, meanwhile, is part baby, part phallus.

They ask to fingers and palms run all over them. It would be crude to call them sex-toys, but their touchy-feely incitements are very strong

eroticism, and of a very practical kind. In terms of the opposition of "carving-good, modelling bad" the works swing both ways. As forms, they're tense, solid and resistant. But as surfaces, the sensation they project is of a hand holding, smoothing, rounding, moulding them. They ask to be handled, to have fingers and palms run all over them (of course that isn't allowed). It would be a bit crude to call them sex-toys, but their touch-fleely incitements are very strong.

This is reflected in the subject matter. Formal compactness favours certain kinds of behaviour – principally hugging, clustering, coupling and bonding. In a group piece like Frank Dobson's *The Man-Child* (authentic ethnic title!), figures and knots are hardly separate from each other, just emerging from unity or merging into it. In fact, the main drama of these works is the pull of individual bodies against the mothering pressure of an embracing form. And though figures sometimes wrestle or cupulate (at least they do in Eric Gill's work), the most common, and the most natural subject here is mothering itself, the primal union of mother and baby.

Breast fashion is often a literal description. In Gaudier's *Caritas*, and later in Moore's *Suckling Infant*, mothers and children are indissolubly joined. One block of stone, one organism. The Moore takes a fully infantile point of view, reducing the mother simply to a pair of breasts. And both images are at first very hard to work out, which is just as it

should be - not being able to tell
the difference between things
is the idea.

It wasn't all primal stuff. What's interesting about the work of Dobson, for instance, is how he can use these devices to do something more socialised and urban. His female *Torso* (armless, headless and stopping above the knee) is his masterpiece, I think, and it's an extraordinary formal construction, full of surprises at every turn. As you move around it, the body continually swells and tautens in ways you least expect. At the same time, it's like a shop window mannequin, with a slim "flapper" bust, breaking into a pair of mighty thighs.

But Epstein's joke-prediction of "an exhibition of stones" was already coming half-true

and baby stones had just been spotted, picked up and playfully put together.

And that's something the work wants you to feel. It pays tribute to the natural world, and the excellent shapes it turns up. It declares that art is best when it simulates nature, because nature really is more artistic than art - it just needs a kind of invisible helping hand, sometimes, to bring it out. Moore and Skeaping take this even further, in little carvings that seem to hope to pass virtually incognito among their natural brothers and sisters on the shore.

Strange to say, but this school of sculpture, remote though it appears from Dadaist outrages, was its own way an anti-art movement. For what could art make that nature couldn't make better? What could be more true to materials than the materials unmodified?

And the move into geometrical abstraction in the later Thirties looks like a last minute gesture of recuperation, before the artists had simply to resign their chisels and polishers in favour of uninterrupted beach-combing. Spheres, cylinders, right angles: here were forms that water and weather couldn't do. As a poet said: "I think that I shall never see/a poem lovely as a tree," but you don't want to put yourself out of business completely. It was left to a later generation, Richard Long, and other raw nature workers, to realise that that could be good artistic business too.

Carving Mountains, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge until April 26. Admission free. Then at De la Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea. May 2 to June 28.

● **Battersea** - 49 Lavender Gardens, Battersea, London, SW11 1DJ ● **Camden** - Middle Yard, Camden Lock, Chalk Farm Road, London, NW1 8AB ● **Bow** - Bow Wharf, 221 Grove Road, London, E3 1AA ● **Leicester** - 30/32 Granby Street, Leicester, LE1 1PE

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Dr Benjamin Spock

TO MILLIONS of parents all over the world, Benjamin Spock was the great baby-guru: the man who wrote *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*. To millions of Americans, he was the peacemaker of the Sixties; the man who incited decent American youth to burn draft cards rather than fight in Vietnam and almost went to jail for it. 30 million of women he was an enemy, advocating liberation for children at the expense of their mothers; and for a period he was a dangerous radical, butt of men like Spiro Agnew who called all hippies "the work of Spock", and Mayor Daley who blamed the riots of Chicago on his "corrupting influence".

So what was Benjamin Spock? If we separate Spock the man, Spock the paediatrician and Spock the politician, we lose sight of a whole that was infinitely greater than the sum of those parts.

His lifetime spanned every decade of this century. Born in 1903, the young Ben had a strict and mildly eccentric "bluestocking" mother and a stern, distant father who was full of recitivism and empty of joy. Shy, lanky and much-teased, Spock grew up God-fearing and full of inner uncertainties. His family fitted into a neighbourhood and society crisscrossed with rigid barriers of race, sex and religion; wealth, status and generation. The same barriers that kept everyone in an ascribed place also ensured a place for each, producing what Spock once described as "a paradox of authoritarian security". Sixty years later he could still remember his amazement when his 6ft 4in frame gave him success as a Yale oarsman and took him to the 1924 Olympics and the beginnings of self-esteem.

It was a summer job in a camp for handicapped children that turned Spock towards medicine and it was his own childhood experiences combined with the conventional symptom-based medicine of the time would not satisfy him. While America laboured through the Depression, Ben Spock laboured

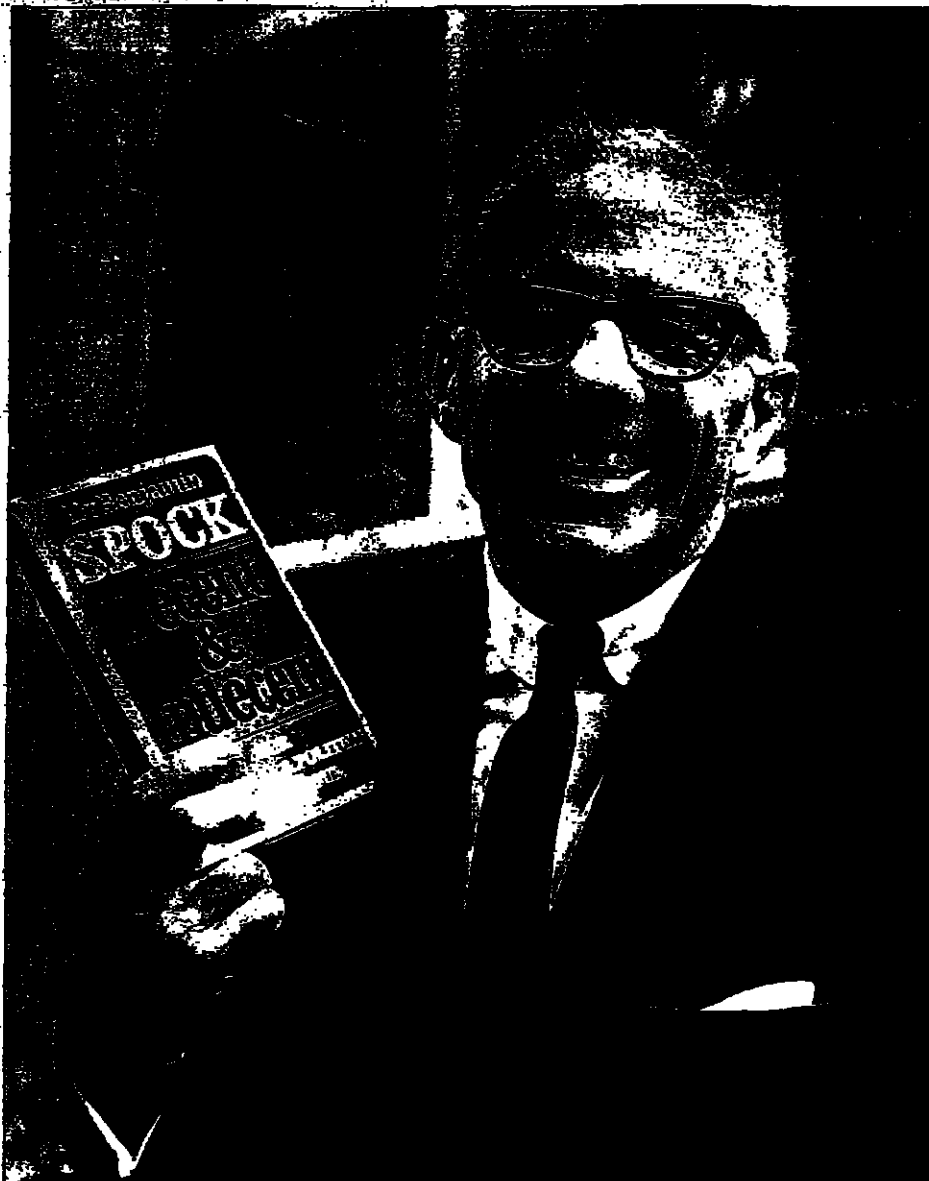
through medical school, married, read Freud, added psychiatry to specialisation in paediatrics - an unheard-of combination - and underwent a personal psychoanalysis.

By the time Dr Spock set up his Manhattan paediatric practice in the Thirties, he had decided that children were people and determined to treat them as such. Parents were astounded to find the doctor in a lounge suit instead of an alarming white coat and his waiting room full of toys. They were even more taken aback when he insisted on talking to their children about feelings, as well as to them about those children's bowels.

The Spock of the Forties was no peacenik; indeed the book that was to change everything for parents and children was delayed by his stint as a naval psychiatrist ("I believed in that war, you see"). He was not a chauvinist or a radical either. He was a children's doctor. He assumed the continuation of the secure moral values of the past, but believed that a society shaken up by war could reform itself without the unfeeling authoritarianism which had distorted his own childhood development and which he believed to be an unnecessary burden on family life for everyone.

He wanted to oust the combative spectre of Original Sin so that parents could enjoy their children: "Your baby isn't a schemer. [He] is a reasonable, friendly human being. If you treat him nicely, he won't take advantage of you." And he wanted to offer parents who now found themselves isolated from traditional family support systems a new security of belief in themselves: "You know more than you think you do," the book began.

The Common Sense Book of Baby and Childcare was published in 1946 and sold three quarters of a million copies in the first year - an amazing number for that time and topic. Spock now divided his time between child development research and parent education, while his message spread through his country and through the world. The way we think about and rear children



Spock: "Your baby is a reasonable, friendly human being"

Photograph: Hulton Getty

has never been the same again nor ever will be. So all-pervasive did his work become that even those who have never read one of the 50 million copies of the book have been indirectly influenced by what started inside its covers and became an integral part of Western culture.

So why did Benjamin Spock not stay with the baby-guru role and keep away from politics? As always, with him, the simple answer was "children's well-being".

During the Fifties Spock the children's doctor saw a

rapid increase in childhood leukaemias and a rise in Strontium 90 in bones. Spock the man spoke up against the nuclear testing that was causing this tragic trend and Spock the politician was born of the discovery that a man who might carry "the mother's vote" was very, very welcome in Washington. "Dr Spock is for my husband and I am for Dr Spock," lisped Jacqueline Kennedy during the 1960 presidential campaign.

But Kennedy managed to control neither nuclear testing nor the Vietnam war and by

1962 Spock was Chairman of Sane (the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy). The Johnson campaign of 1964 brought Spock to angry disillusionment. Johnson obtained his support with specific guarantees to halt nuclear testing if he was elected. Immediately after his election he ordered testing to be resumed. One can still hear Spock the good and moral man through Spock the political innocent who said, "It was impossible for me not to react with extreme indignation."

His political innocence was over. The Vietnam war, which

he regarded as "one of the dirtiest wars that has ever been fought", was escalating. Unemployment and inflation were spiralling. He saw poverty and social injustice everywhere and only the mothers and young people who marched with him in thousands seemed to care: "Two-thirds of Americans would give up the Bill of Rights in order to justify throwing young protesters in jail."

Spock was a leading figure in the campaign against the Vietnam war throughout the Sixties and in 1968 was indicted for encouraging young Americans to burn their draft cards. He was convicted and, though the Appeal Court saved him from serving his prison sentence, "The whole experience radicalised me. I realised that the United States had always been as imperialist as it dared to be."

In 1970 he published a book called *Decent and Indecent: our personal and political behaviour* in which he tried to communicate his deep concern for the personal materialism and political corruption he saw all around him. Eventually he was to help to found the People's Party and to run, halfheartedly, for President in 1972.

In the meantime, though, his enormous influence over millions of young Americans, many of them "Spock babies" grown up, made him a no-holds-barred target for those he saw as oppressors: supporters of Johnson - "the biggest bully of all time"; and Nixon - "an authoritarian man". There was scarcely an ill in a sick society for which he was not held responsible and even the new edition of *Baby and Child Care*, published in the same year that he faced imprisonment, was turned against him. In this new edition, Spock sought to remind people that children need to learn from parents the very qualities he saw diminishing in society: a sense of values; of service rather than self-gratification; of sensitivity to others as well as to self.

Perhaps the message was too painful for parents: certainly it was untimely, since home and children were unfashionable topics that risked the ire of a

women's movement that had not yet begun to come to terms with maternity. "I hope you realise that you are a major oppressor of women, in the company of Sigmund Freud," thundered Gloria Steinem.

Spock later described the Seventies as "a difficult time for me". Countless sensational articles appeared, accusing him of the double crime of having been the architect of the "permissive society" and now of trying, too late, to reverse himself. For the first time, sales of the book plummeted. In 1974 a magazine called the *Red Book* published a run-of-the-mill article he wrote in a form so sensational it seemed like an attempt at character assassination. In 1975 nearly half a century's marriage ended in divorce. In 1976 he married again and published yet another edition of the book, freed of sexism and carefully referring to babies as "they" ("It makes them sound a bit like a crowd though," he commented regretfully).

Although Spock accepted the charge of sexism in his earlier writing, he never truly felt himself to be a chauvinist, nor could anyone who knew him charge him with being so. As always, his attitudes to wider social issues, including feminism, were shaped by his concern for children: "Of course women as people have as much right to careers as people who are men. That simply emphasises the obvious fact that men have as much responsibility as their wives in who is going to take care of the children."

Spock the man was still first and foremost Dr Spock the paediatrician and it was his concern for the child who must be father (or mother) to the man (or woman) which had always shaped his political activity - and did so until his death. He explained his underlying concerns in an interview with the *Observer* in 1969 far better than anyone can do it for him: "We live in a disenchanted, disillusioned age - not about things but about human beings... I believe that Man's disillusionment is based on a misunderstanding of his nature. He is idealistic in his aspirations. His relationships are primarily spiritual."

His capacity for abstract reasoning has enabled him to discover much of the meaning of the universe. He has created beauty in all the arts. All this has been made possible by the aspirations kindled in him in early childhood by his adoration of his parents. Whether or not a man has religious faith, he can believe in the power of love and in Man's potentialities for good, if he understands the spiritual development of the child.

Benjamin Spock was still fighting irrepressibly for children in 1988, at the age of 85, when I was privileged to share a platform with him and Berry T. Brazelton, America's leading academic and favourite television paediatrician. Hundreds of Boston parents expected practical advice on combining child-care with their jobs, but our preliminary conversations were all about society's failure to give parenting the status and economic priority it deserves. Our conveyor was becoming desperate: "Dr Spock, can't you say something about the need for more nursery schools?" she begged.

"No," replied Spock firmly. "I'm entirely convinced that all our troubles grow out of this materialist, capitalist society and it's no good tinkering with that by saying we need more nursery schools." Looking at her appalled face, he roared with laughter and added: "The whole damned political and economic system must be changed. That's what I'm going to say and I bet that's what Penny's going to say too."

Next morning, as we waited to enter the lecture hall, she tried one last appeal: "People, this meeting is supposed to be about babies. Can't you be a bit less political?"

"Babies are political," Benjamin Spock replied. "Babies are what politics is all about."

Penelope Leach

Benjamin Spock, paediatrician: born New Haven, Connecticut 2 May 1903; Professor of Child Development, University of Pittsburgh 1951-55; Professor of Child Development, Western Reserve University 1955-67; married 1927 Jane Cheney (two sons; marriage dissolved 1975); 1976 Mary Morgan (one stepdaughter); died San Diego, California 15 March 1998.

Peter Livesey

PETER LIVESEY drove British rock climbing to new standards during the Seventies.

His speed, strength and stamina were developed young as a Yorkshire schoolboy running at national champion level. The seniors in his club included Derek Ibbotson, who had the current record for the mile, and the young Livesey developed the same kind of competitive dedication. He also had a natural talent for other outdoor sports, branching out into canoeing, rock climbing and caving. For a while he concentrated his efforts underground, becoming one of the best cavers in the world, joining expeditions to Jamaica, Greece and Ghar Paru, in Iran. It was only in his late twenties that he turned seriously to rock climbing.

His impact on the climbing world was almost immediate, starting in 1971 in the intimi-

dating gorge of Gordale Scar with the first free ascent of Face Route, previously climbed only with the aid of steel pegs. That was the first of many bold, strenuous routes up fiercely overhanging limestone. As his close friend and climbing partner, John Sheard, put it, "For Pete to apply the definition 'rock climber' to himself, it had to include the unspoken prefix 'best'; anything else was playing around." A few might nuzzle over "best" but all would probably agree that Livesey brought a whole new attitude to the sport.

First there was his athletic background. The stamina, strength and speed developed as a schoolboy gave him a natural edge, which he honed by systematic training on the then new indoor climbing walls, particularly during his exile for a year's teacher training practice in the lowlands of Scunthorpe. That

dedicated approach to training was new, but mere athletic skills were not enough to succeed hundreds of feet off the ground on steep, potentially dangerous, rock, following incipient lines of tiny holds which others had never tried to link before. Here mental control was everything.

John Sheard, who followed him up countless routes, observes: "Pete was totally competent and safe on things which would have killed the rest of us. He had an amazing ability to hang around and rest - and place fiddly protective equipment - on overhanging rock. When you got there you just couldn't see how he had done it."

Livesey left his mark far beyond the microcosmic world of Yorkshire climbing, particularly in 1974, when he discovered the tenuous, improbable line of Footless Crow, on Goat Crag, in Borrowdale. Later that year

he travelled to Snowdonia to leave his signature on a cliff redolent with history - Dinas Cromlech. This was the scene of Joe Brown's great Fifties climb, Cenotaph Corner. Twenty-two years on, Livesey tackled the seemingly blank right wall of the great square-cut corner, linking a complex series of moves up tiny flakes of dolomite. Right Wall is now an exhilarating classic enjoyed by hundreds of competent climbers, reared on a hundred gyms and armed with sophisticated modern protection devices. Twenty-four years ago it was an imaginative step into the unknown.

Beyond the parochial confines of British climbing, Livesey sought the scale of grander cliffs. In Norway he made the second ascent of the 5,000ft-high Troll Wall. In the Dolomites he free-climbed some of the great walls climbed



Livesey: mental control

Photograph: Geoff Birdes

originally with artificial aid. In Austria's Kaisersgrube he amazed the locals with his speed and stamina. In Provence, he showed what could be done in the stupendous Gorge du Verdon, where local experts rested on *in situ* steel pegs - and pulled

up on them when things got a bit tough - Livesey climbed free, relying on ingenuity and the strength in his fingers.

His most elegant and celebrated new route here was Piche Nibou, although his own knobbly-kneed climbing style

was more effective than elegant. He also dressed in the kind of stylish hand-me-down rags which would appal today's lycra-coordinated Gallic athletes.

Livesey also left his mark in California's famed Yosemite Valley. A partner on the first ascent of "Carbon Wall" recalls that, unknown to the rest of the team, Livesey made a recone the day before the climb, abseiling down the 500 feet of the route to inspect the difficulties. "It was typical of Livesey: he was always one step ahead of everyone else, particularly Ron Fawcett - he had to find ways to outwit Ron, because Ron really was the best climber in the world."

The young protégé, Fawcett, eventually surpassed the master and, after climbing his Cheedale swansong Golden Mile in 1981, Livesey more or less quit rock climbing. He turned to orienteering, excelling

at that pursuit just as he had done at all the others.

Pete Livesey directed the well-respected outdoor pursuits course at Ilkley and Bradford Community College and served on several committees of the British Mountaineering Council, but his greatest legacy is the actual climbs he created and the impact he made on rock climbing. He took his own climbing very seriously but the inner intensity was masked by a mischievous sense of humour and by moments of inspired theatricality, such as the time he made one of the first free ascents of the famous Welsh climb Tensar, solo, in Hush Puppies.

Stephen Venables

Peter Michael Livesey, mountaineer: born Huddersfield 12 September 1943; married Sona (one daughter); died Malham, North Yorkshire 26 February 1998.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS

HEWES / BURNS: On 13 February, to Deborah and Jonathan, a son, Edward Carl John, a brother for Emily and Theo.

HOLLAND: On 12 March, in London, to Victoria (née Joffe) and David, a son (Matthew Theodore Orlando).

MARKE: On Friday 13 March 1998 at the John Radcliffe, Oxford, to Barbara (née Anderson) and Laurence, a son, Alexander Laurence, a brother for Francesca.

DEATHS

SINDEN: Edith Sybella (née Packer), widow of Thomas Willard, of Maidstone, Kent, died Wednesday 11 March, Funeral Service 12.30pm 20 March at St Margaret's Church, Barming, Maidstone, and 1.30pm at Vinters Park Crematorium, Maidstone. Afterwards, all friends warmly invited to join Edith's family at the Blackthorn Trust, St Andrew's Road, Maidstone. Donations to the Blackthorn Trust via St Andrew's Church, 2 Thornhill Place, Maidstone ME14 2SR. 01622 754663.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

RAJMAK Dhillon: A Memorial Service for Dr Middle Rajma will be held in St George's, Hanover Square, on Tuesday 21 April 1998 at 11.30am.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen holds an Engagement at Buckingham Palace. Changing of the Guard. The Household Cavalry Mounted Band will play the Queen's Lullaby at Horse Guards, 11am.

Birthdays

Sir William Aldous, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 62; Mr Patrick Allen, actor, 71; Professor John Baines, Egyptologist, 52; Mr Jeff Banks, fashion designer, 56; Sir Donald Barron, former chairman, Midland Bank, 77; Mr Gavin Campbell, actor and television presenter, 52; Sir John Chalfrey, Lord Mayor of London, 67; Professor David Dilks, Vice-Chancellor, Hull University, 60; Miss Lesley Ann Down, actress, 44; Mr Patrick Duffy, actor, 49; Miss Emma Gayson, actress, 51; Vice-Admiral Sir Donald Gibson, 82; Sir Arthur Hockaday, former Secretary and Director-General, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 72; Professor George Hughes, zoologist, 73; Mr Robin Koor-Johnson, yachtsman, 59; Professor John Lill, concert pianist, 54; Mrs Penelope Lively, author, 65; Sir Ramsay Melhuish, former ambassador to Thailand, 66; The Most Rev Keith O'Brien, Roman Catholic Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, 64; Mr Paul Radcliffe, former ambassador to Cambodia, 53; Sir Patrick Reilly, former diplomat, 89; Miss Galina Semova, ballet dancer, 61; Mr Brian Sedgemoor MP, 61; Sir Patrick Sergeant, founder and former chairman, Eurocomedy Publications, 74; Mr John F. Smith MP, 47; Dr David Stafford-Cook, psychiatrist, 82; Mr Max Stafford Clark, artistic director, Out of Joint Theatre Company, 57; Sir Robert Walker, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 60; Mr Michael Whitaker, show-jumper, 38.

Anniversaries

Births: Thomas Chalmers, minister, philanthropist and author, 1780; Edmund Kean, actor, 1789; Pasquale

Stanislao Mancini, statesman, 1817; Jean Ingelow, poet, 1820; Gottlieb Daimler, automobile pioneer, 1834; Kate Greenaway, artist and children's book illustrator, 1846; Margaret Grace Bondfield, the first woman cabinet minister, 1873; Nat "King" Cole (Nathaniel Adams Cole), singer and pianist, 1919; Rudolf Hametowich Nureyev, ballet star and director, 1938. Deaths: Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, playwright and poet, 1741; Gilbert Burnet, bishop and historian, 1787; Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel, astronomer and mathematician, 1846; Christian Johann Doppler, physicist, 1853; Robert Chambers, publisher and author, 1871; Li-Gen Sir John Bagot Gubb (Gubb Pasha), commander of the Arab Legion, 1986; Helen Hayes (Helen Hayes Brown), actress, 1993; Mai Elisabeth Zetterling, actress and film-maker, 1994. On this day: the Duchy of Cornwall was created, 1337; Oliver Cromwell declared England a Commonwealth, 1649; Captain Lawrence Oates, with Scott's expedition, walked out into the Antarctic wastes, never to return, 1912; Marie Stopes opened her first birth control clinic in London, 1921. Today is the St Patrick's Day and the Feast Day of the Martyrs of the Scapular, St Gertrude of Nivelles, St Joseph of Arimathea and St Paul of Cyprus.

Lectures

National Portrait Gallery: Matthew Sturgis, "Aubrey Beardsley", 1.10pm. Royal Institution: Ralph Barrett, Susan Aldridge, Irene McCabe, Harry Cole, "Public Domain: the doomed space station", 7pm.

LAW REPORT: 17 MARCH 1998

Part-time worker's claim did not depend on sex

Jesuthasan v London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham; Court of Appeal (Lady Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Thomas and Lord Justice Mummery) 26 February 1998.

A MALE part-time worker in the public sector who had been dismissed prior to the amendment of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978 by the Employment Protection (Part-Time Employees) Regulations 1995 was entitled to claim for redundancy and unfair dismissal in the same way as a female employee.

The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal of VJ. Jesuthasan against the decision of the Employment Appeal Tribunal to reverse the decision of the Industrial Tribunal, which had granted him leave to amend his originating application in his claim against his employer, the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

The applicant, a Sri Lankan national, began employment with the council in November 1990 as a maths teacher at HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs. He worked eight hours a week for three years, and his fixed term contract expired on 30 July 1993 and was not renewed.

In his originating application filed with the Industrial Tribunal the applicant identified his type of complaint as "racial discrimination". The council expressly denied that the applicant had been discriminated against on the ground of his race, and alleged that the sole reason for the decision not to offer him a new contract was that a part-time maths teacher was not required for that academic year. The applicant subsequently applied to amend his originating application to include claims for unfair dismissal and redundancy payment.

Brian Langstaff QC (Hammersmith and Fulham Law Centre) for the ap-

pellant; Nigel Giffin (Head of Legal Services, Hammersmith and Fulham) for the council.

Lord Justice Mummery said that the crucial point, which had emerged for the first time on the present appeal, was whether, in consequence of the decision of the House of Lords in *R v Secretary of State for Employment, ex p Equal Opportunities Commission* [1995] 1 AC 1 (the EOC case), a male part-time worker employed in the public sector was entitled to claim a redundancy payment and compensation for unfair dismissal in respect of a dismissal occurring before the amendment of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978 by the Employment Protection (Part-Time Employees) Regulations 1995.

In the EOC case the Equal Opportunities Commission had been granted judicial review of provisions of the 1978

Act, which limited the right to a redundancy payment and protection against unfair dismissal to employees who were able to satisfy the qualifying periods for entitlement. The House of Lords had decided that those provisions were incompatible with EC law and had declared that, in cases covered by them, the qualifying periods for redundancy payments and unfair dismissal were dispensed.

The House of Lords had held that judicial review was not the appropriate procedure to adjudicate on the claims of Mrs Day, an individual applicant joined in the proceedings, but that the Industrial Tribunal would have jurisdiction to decide the questions of indirect discrimination under EC law raised on the judicial review application.

The applicant was in the same jurisdictional position as Mrs Day, and claimed to be entitled to pursue his claims in reliance on the general decla-

rations in the EOC case regarding "employees" and not just "female employees". The council argued that Mrs Day had been entitled to rely on the declarations of incompatibility with EC law by reason of indirect discrimination against women, and that the applicant had not been discriminated against on the ground of sex.

Those submissions, however, involved a fundamental confusion both of the general propositions of law in the EOC case, which had dispensed the qualifying periods in respect of employees generally, regardless of sex, and of the nature of the applicant's complaint. He did not complain of sex discrimination, but claimed unfair dismissal and redundancy pay. It would be unjust to refuse to allow the applicant to amend his claim, and the order of the Industrial Tribunal would accordingly be restored.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

THE INDEPENDENT

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Justice is justice, even 80 years late

PEOPLE'S TRUST in their system of government waxes and wanes – though there has, it's true, been more of the latter recently than the former, which is one good reason Labour should, with the Liberal Democrats' support, press on with the agenda of constitutional change and renewal. Yet, while we are suspicious of politicians, we still have an impressive faith in the ability of the state to deliver justice, especially by reopening and reviewing cases where people intensely feel an injustice has been done.

The passion of the Lawrence family, so cruelly let down by the criminal justice system; the determination of the Hillsborough victims' relatives; the anger (and puzzlement) of those deprived of a loved one by CJD – there is no guarantee that state inquiries after the event will answer all the questions raised in these cases, or heal the emotional wounds. But the process of truth-seeking and, where appropriate, of blaming, can have useful healing properties. There are those who say the British constitution in its unwritten state is really a matter of proper procedure – outcomes matter less than the fact of fair dealings. Certainly, such inquiries into failed procedure must be conducted by people who are above every suspicion. The Lawrence family's misgivings about the lawyers involved in the investigation of why Stephen's killers were not brought to justice must be quietened, by a change of personnel if necessary.

It is in a similar spirit that we think the request for a general pardon by relatives of British soldiers shot for cowardice during the First World War should be met. Their argument is based partly on this point about procedure. Due process, even by the standards of a British Army at war, was not always observed; relevant evidence was not always presented; the circumstances of the front were not taken into account. Because trials were faulty, the results were unjust. The men's descendants make another point, too. Cowardice in the trenches was not a moral deficiency but (we might nowadays be tempted to say) an almost rational response to horror; many of the men were suffering almost unimaginable torment in an industrial-scale carnage house.

Their execution cast a stain on individual soldiers, their families and those who remember them. In opposition, Labour, including the armed forces minister himself, seemed to accept the need to wipe it clean. A number of MPs, some of them now in the Cabinet, voted for a general pardon. They were right then. Now they are wrong if – as reports suggest – they are backsliding and having second thoughts.

Of course it is going to be difficult to disinter every case, however accurate the remaining paperwork; of course not every verdict was faulty – there is an offence of cowardice in the face of the enemy and not every desertion is justified by circumstance or medical condition. Yet there are two good reasons for a pardon, one specific to the First World War, one more general. There is something special about the place of that conflict in our culture and collective memory. Lately the revisionists have been making progress among professional historians. Scholars are now saying the British Army in France and Flanders were not lions led by donkeys, but lions led by lions; that many general officers (who suffered and died, too) were heroes and talented military tacticians. None the less, Joan Littlewood has the best tunes, still. The war is remembered as a conflict based on class, an episode in which ordinary people were sent to their death in hordes because this was not, in the way the Second World War was, a democratic and popular conflict. A general pardon would recognise the way this war continues to be perceived and go some way to pacifying the still lively sense that it was an especially horrible war.

A pardon would not imply that the officers involved in sentencing soldiers to death were evil men or even that the decisions they made in military courts were "wrong". We must all be relativists, to the extent that we recognise people behave in the circumstances they are given, or are allowed to make. But we are only relative relativists. We have to believe there are universal standards of right conduct which exist outside of time, for without such a scale we lack the means to adjudicate that unique event, the Holocaust.

Besides we are not relativists about our own moral climate. To pardon those men shot in the 1914-1918 War would answer a contemporary perception about government. If Labour ministers cared only for their own skins, they would realise refusing a pardon is a passport to unpopularity. They should, however, reflect on the broader case for sticking to their earlier support. Their potency as an administration depends on people seeing government as a set of fair procedures, which are able to correct themselves when mistakes are made. That includes mistakes made over the killing of a black youngster on the streets of London. And it includes mistakes made eighty years ago.

Remedies for credulity

TWO OF the most abused words in the contemporary vocabulary are "natural" and "holistic". When they are coupled with "therapy" blue lights flash and sirens sound. Thus all those rational souls who have always harboured doubts about "alternative" therapies will take malicious comfort from the report today that acupuncturists do not always seem to know where they are putting their needles. To be pierced by a non-sterile needle is one thing. But it is quite another kettle of carp to find that some acupuncturists have been sticking their needles into vital organs, such as the heart, lung and spine. Many of us are sceptically tolerant. We note that Prince Charles, the enthusiast for alternatives, resorts to a person in a white coat with medical degrees when he falls off his polo pony. Alternative medicine is fine as long as it does no actual harm; if it cures headache and nausea without inducing fits or heart failure, well and good. But doubts begin when practitioners of cult therapies start putting people in hospital as a result of their "cures". Once we were perhaps over-credulous about the power of conventional medicine – never questioning the lofty doctors, simply assuming that the drugs would work. Now, however, we may be becoming too credulous about the alternatives. A healthy mind is suspicious of all complete systems.



Evening in the Blue Mountains of Jamaica: a boy runs home through the hills

Photograph: Tom Pilsdon
A 9x12 print of this photograph can be ordered on 0171-293 2534

PICTURE OF THE DAY

Hospital mergers

YOUR REPORT on the increasing number of hospital mergers (11 March) did not touch on the two most vital issues.

The prime reason given by the Royal College of Surgeons and the BMA for merging so as to obtain catchment populations of upwards of 500,000 is that otherwise it is not possible to provide continuous consultant cover, and thus safe emergency services, 24 hours a day, every day of the year. It is better – measured in terms of survival – for patients with life-threatening conditions to be transported a few more miles into the hands of top-class experts than to have the convenience of proximity, but thinly spread skills.

The second issue is that the very technological developments that make it vital to centralise emergency care also allow the great majority of non-emergency cases to be treated away from the central hospital. Rather than closing local hospitals, they can be developed in a new role to include specialist outpatient clinics, minor casualty units, radiology and physiotherapy departments, maternity units for normal births and facilities to deal with the elective surgical work which makes up waiting lists.

So rather than most patients having to travel farther (except for emergency care of life-threatening conditions) locality hospitals can bring most of the functions for which most people have to go to hospital much closer to where they live.

Dr RONNIE POLLOCK
MPA Health Strategy and Planning
London NW1

THE SECRETARY of State for Health and the East Kent Health Authority appear bent on closing Kent and Canterbury Hospital. All the major treatments will be passed to hospitals in Margate and Ashford, leaving a cottage hospital here for nosebleeds and minor cases of gout. This proposal has come after the traditional heart-searching and, of course, bean-counting and is the only logical course.

It is perfectly simple: you just have to imagine that Canterbury was not there and you were going to build it.

"Let's have a city of at least 40,000 people, and about another 100,000 just outside, with a big tourist attraction in the middle; say, two million visitors a year. We'd better have a university – everyone else has got one – so put 20,000 kids up there. Stick all the well-known stores in the High Street and a couple of supermarkets on the fringe. We'll need a railway station – make that two – a bus station and a coach park. Fire brigade here, police there. Dot some industry around, some churches and a few schools and that should do it."

"What about a hospital?"
"Oh, stick that fifteen miles away."
COLIN STANDFIELD
Canterbury, Kent

After the hunt Bill

SO THE Bill to end hunting with dogs has been lost.

The majority of the nation wanted it to succeed. The majority of country people wanted it to succeed. The overwhelming majority of the House of Commons voted for it to succeed. But the Government didn't want it.

An indirectly elected government chosen by an indirectly elected prime minister appointed by a non-elected Head of State allowed our antiquated legislative procedures to frustrate the will of the people and their elected representatives. And *The Independent* defends this (leading article, 14 March).

What do we say to the many people who have worked for so long and so hard to achieve an end to this cruel activity? What do we say to those who want to take "direct action"?
M J FARRELL
Ongar, Essex

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number. Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

THE LOGIC of your leading article "Drop the humbug about hunting" (14 March) was exemplary – until your discussion of the banning of activities for moral reasons.

You cited adultery and abortion as practices regarded as wrong by many people where you clearly considered legislation to be inappropriate. Would you say the "same about paedophilia, rape, or murder?"

Obviously it is a question of where to draw the line. The vast majority in this country want a line to be drawn against torturing a wild animal for fun: you do not. Your attitude is as contemptible as the duplicitous response of the Government on this issue.
STAN ROSENTHAL
Lynfield, West Sussex

WHY DO so many MP and others say that foxes need culling? When we farmed 86 acres in Devon where there were plenty of rabbits and other fox food, there was no increase in fox numbers in eleven years. Nor did we lose any of our 500 free-range poultry, who were able to roam anywhere on the farm.

We had a fox earth and a badger sett on the farm. We did not interfere with our foxes. We understood wildlife and took every precaution, not allowing hens to nest in hedges and always shut up houses at night. It is useless for gamekeepers to shoot, snare and poison every fox on their estates, when other foxes will soon replace them from outside. Two keepers I knew had a more sensible solution: if a vixen was seen taking rabbits and other "fur" to her cubs, she was saved. But if a vixen was taking "feather" to feed her cubs they were all destroyed to prevent these cubs killing birds when adult. In time these keepers would have fewer

foxes to kill, and rabbits, rats and mice would be kept down by the resident foxes. In the great advantage of the game birds.

ERIC ASHBY
Ringwood, Hampshire
YOUR leading article of 14 March states that "practices such as the 'blooding' of children are little short of barbaric". Little short?
MARK RASMUSSEN
London E11

WHATEVER we may think of fox and deer hunting, Mozart and Beethoven and the musical world owe the pursuit of animals on horseback an incalculable debt. Without mounted huntsmen the helical horn (*cor de chasse*) would not have evolved.

The helical horn was slung in double-coil, from left shoulder to right side. The huntsman's girth determined the length (and therefore pitch). Longest was 14ft (in D) and lesser hoops 13ft and 12ft (in E-flat and F). The multiple harmonics of these long tubes encouraged duet playing: the forests rang – and composers listened. The 18th century found experiment with a tunnelled mouthpiece and half-in-bell technique transforming the open-air stridency of the *cor de chasse* into the French Horn of drawing-room delight.

Mozart recognised the potential and wrote horn parts into all of his orchestral works. Beethoven followed, deeply involving horns in all his symphonies.

We might ask what has become of the relatively musical *cor de chasse*? Today's obviously unmusical huntmen seem content with their short two-note easy-to-play screech: "thing. Grounds for banning?"
FARQUHARSON COUSINS
Harrow, Middlesex

Don't shun Turkey

THE estrangement between the European Union and Turkey is terribly dangerous, seeming to convey the message that religious difference matters more than secular institutions (leading article, 13 March). The Kurdish problem should not be made an insuperable obstacle. After all, France was a founder member of the EEC despite her war in Algeria. In a wider context, Turkey is the main barrier to the coalescence of a potential sectarian war-front stretching from Bosnia to Basra and beyond, by way of Palestine. For all our sakes, the Turks should be rewarded for eight decades of secular government.
P J STEWART
Oxford

No Teletubbies here

INSTEAD of this endless discussion on the comparative merits of different television programmes and their effects on our children, why not compare television with real life.

I have a two-year-old boy and no television. Gasp! I spend my time with my son walking, visiting friends, museums, farms and toddler gyms, playing with trains, Duplo, "soft stuff" (wonderful invention), bits of cardboard, paper and loo rolls, drawing, reading, singing silly songs, cuddling and generally living.

He is a bright, articulate, happy, sociable little boy who as far as I am aware doesn't miss television: what could he honestly be missing?
JUDITH C WOODHOUSE
Penarth, South Glamorgan

Portia's prejudice

TONY RIDGE is wrong about *The Merchant of Venice* (letter, 16 March). It is not the heroine who is made to fancy "the noble Ethiopian" (actually he is Moroccan), but the audience. Portia's attitude is best summed up in her two gibes to Nerissa about the Prince's complexion: proving that even a multi-million-aress can come cheap.
JAMES LOADER
Orpington, Kent

Where agony aunts turn when it all gets too much for them



MILES KINGSTON

WHEN YOU have an emotional problem, you can always write to an agony aunt – but who do agony aunts turn to with THEIR problems? To Auntie Agony, that's who! The only agony aunt who deals exclusively with the problems and troubles peculiar to agony aunts! And she's back again today with another postbag of problems sent in by the country's agony aunts! Right, that's enough exclamation marks, so on to the emotional minefield with Auntie Agony, and the first problem please...

Dear Auntie Agony, You really must help, as I am feeling almost suicidal. I have been running a problem corner for a major group of provincial newspapers for several years now, and the pressure must be getting to me because I find myself subject to the most extreme mood swings. One week I might be bubbly and extrovert, almost manically so, and the next week I could easily be just as caught in a deep depression. This

has obviously affected my work, as the solutions I offer to people's problems tend to vary wildly according to my mood.

For instance, if some woman writes in to say that that her marriage seems to have stagnated and she thinks her husband may be having an affair, I might, if I am in my cheerful mode, encourage her to go out and have an affair herself, to live a little! But if I am on the downward curve, I might tell her that things aren't going to get any better, that we are sent into this world to suffer and that she might as well stick with a stagnating marriage as anything else.

In other words, I will give two completely opposite pieces of advice depending on my mood swing, and they can't both be right, can they? Well, I suppose they both could be right, depending on the people involved – after all, you never really know enough about people to give them the right advice, do you? Actually, I think I'm making a bit of a fuss about nothing. Can't really think

why I bothered you. Having written this letter and talked it through has made me feel a whole heap better. Thanks, Auntie! You've done it again!
Auntie Agony writes: Not at all. Thank you for showing us your lovely mood swing. And the next...

Dear Auntie Agony, I run a problem corner for a national newspaper which I would rather not mention the name of, and although I am a man, I have always written under a woman's assumed name. I am sure you can guess the reasons for this. People always assume that women handle emotional problems better, and are more sensible when it comes to sorting out life (though if that were true, all psychiatrists would be women and male psychiatrists would be distressed!) and I certainly feel when I get down to problem-handling that thinking my way into my chosen female character helps me to find a solution.

The female role I adopt is rather warmer

and softer than the real me, but the trouble is I have begun to feel rather attracted to this woman as whom I masquerade, and am very tempted to start an attachment with her. Am I being very foolish?

Auntie Agony writes: Let me get this straight. Are you falling in love with yourself? And wondering if you should have an affair with yourself?

Dear Auntie Agony, Yes.
Auntie Agony writes: Hmmmmmm... Which one of you is writing this?

Dear Auntie Agony, The man.
Auntie Agony writes: Leave her alone, you beast! How dare you take advantage of her? Hands off! And the next...

Dear Auntie Agony, I have been doing my column for so long now that I have got tired of the banal, repetitive problems which people send me, and I have started inventing problems to solve. In fact, I haven't had a genuine letter in my column for over a year. But I do feel that the problems I invent are

more interesting than the real ones I am sent, which I always throw away. Is this very wrong?

Auntie Agony writes: You're making this up, aren't you?

Dear Auntie Agony, Yes.

Auntie Agony writes: And the next!

Dear Auntie Agony, Almost all papers have an agony aunt. The astrologer claims that human problems are tied to birth signs. The agony aunts assume that human problems are tied to character. They can't both be right, can they? And yet we take both on trust, and believe both of them! Isn't this just a bit mad?

Auntie Agony writes: What sign are you?

Dear Auntie Agony, I am Scorpio.

Auntie Agony writes: Typical!

Auntie Agony will be back again soon. Keep these letters rolling in! Or we'll have to make them up!

Hague's best hope: say little and pray for a recession



DONALD
MACINTYRE

How should the Leader of the Opposition respond to a Budget that could have been given by a Tory Chancellor?

DEAR WILLIAM,

Here are a few – entirely unsolicited – pointers to how you should handle your speech after today's Budget. My first piece of advice is don't look up at the press gallery before you speak. It's always a bit dispiriting watching the journalists rush out as soon as the Chancellor sits down. At least convention dictates that most MPs stay until you have finished. Never the less, they will be twitching to get out of the Chamber (poor Paddy Ashdown has to speak to a rapidly emptying House) to get onto their brokers, or at least to their local newspapers with the usual banalities – this is a black day/new dawn for our town etc. So you need not go on for too long.

Which is just as well. Because, frankly, it's not going to be that easy this year. You have a number of problems of which the first and most obvious is the utter failure of this Government to fulfil expectations by being profigate with what they would no doubt call the people's money. You would have cheerfully killed for the borrowing figures Brown's going to announce today. All this "prudence with a purpose" stuff has a rather convincing ring about it. And while you can bang on about the deficit reduction being the legacy of the Tories' brilliant economic management – or more particularly that of Ken Clarke, the man you beat to win the leadership – quite a lot of people still remember how borrowing lurched out of control after the 1992 election. Labour governments weren't supposed to act like this. They were supposed to spend like maniacs and then have an economic crisis (like the IMF one in 1976). Sadly for you, Brown long ago learnt the lesson from all this.

There are a few other things you can't do. You can't join forces with those City hawks who will accuse him of not taking enough money out of the economy in taxes to ease the pressure on interest rates. To do so would fatally undermine one of the few attacks you can mount – on the taxes you hope he will raise. You can't attack him for spending money on education and health – I bet the leaks about Frank Dobson winning another £500m for the NHS are right – without making yourself even more unpopular than you are already. Nor does it cut much ice to accuse the Chancellor of being prudent for the sinister motive of making the country shipshape for EMU. You may be anti-single currency – and by the way, you might have a word with Michael Portillo and ask him why he seemed to be saying on Sunday that EMU might actually work – but are you against curbing the deficit in the way that the Maastricht criteria require? Surely not.

And you should be a bit careful about shouting U-turn when the Chancellor puts some money back into the purses of lone mothers. The cuts were yours in the first place – and a lot of North American polling experience shows that voters rather like U-turns.

They mean that the government got it wrong before and is now getting it right.

Sorry to dwell on the pitfalls. Let's think about the positives. The advice you've been getting from your own experts is that the Chancellor will be less tough on business, especially small business, than his pre-Budget report suggested six months ago that he might be, at least in the short term. And tougher on consumers through higher duties on alcohol, tobacco, petrol, and so on. Peter Lilley would probably have done the same if he were the Chancellor. But that needs to stop you attacking Brown for taxing consumers.

Similarly, if Gordon Brown decides to abolish Mins – or cut it again – he will be following a path already mapped out by Ken Clarke. It was after all Clarke who decoupled Mins from income tax rates by bringing it down to 15 per cent. Likewise you should be rather careful about an all-out, detailed onslaught on any measures to close inheritance tax loopholes the Chancellor may introduce. Sure, the Major government was – in theory – attached to the idea of abolishing inheritance tax altogether. But a few of your own more intelligent MPs rightly think it's rather a good tax and that you don't make a more entrepreneurial society by creating a generation of rich layabouts who don't need to work because they've inherited so much cash from grandpa. The point is that when it comes to your soundbite for ITN, you can still add Mins and cuts on inheritance tax avoidance to your list of New Labour taxes; it's low politics but it's no less than Gordon Brown did with your 22 tax rises. Don't go mad, however. A little humility may be needed with an electorate that doesn't exactly trust you on tax.

One other tip: the advice you've been getting to scrutinise pretty carefully the widely trailed £1bn or so for childcare is sound. If, as seems possible, the Chancellor gives help to lone parents and to couples who are both working, but not to couples with only one income, then you have a line of attack: aren't mothers looking after their children at home also entitled to a bit of childcare money – if only to get out of the house for a bit?

While it makes sense to try and attack the Budget as an onslaught on the middle class, it may in the end be quite skillfully calibrated. There will, for example, be quite a lot more consultation before any move to tax child benefit – which really would hit prosperous middle England. And this isn't necessarily the result of a Brown-Blair conflict. Just because Tony Blair never forgets that *Daily Mail* readers helped to win him his victory, it doesn't mean that Gordon Brown doesn't remember it too. And just because Gordon Brown wants redistribution to the poor by making it more attractive to be in work, it doesn't mean that Blair doesn't want that to happen too. The other difficulty is that the economy is in good shape – at the moment. A recession, if it comes, will make your life much easier. Don't forget that it was Brown who made the Bank of England independent. You can always remind the House of that to help him take the blame in future if it fails, after the agonies it is going through on whether to raise interest rates again, to deliver the soft landing everyone hopes for. (It'll also mean he takes the credit if they succeed – but he'll do that anyway.)

You get the Budget press releases on Privy Council terms well before the speech. Have your experts comb through them for anything unpleasant that Brown may not mention in his speech – it's the trick that Blair used more than once in Opposition. Try and find a clear simple message – Blair's depiction of a Clarke's "VAT on fuel budget" was a good example. And enjoy it. It's a good chance to get on TV. It's an advantage that is you and not Peter Lilley doing the job. You're a much better performer at the dispatch box than he is. And there's only so much you can do. After all, it was always going to be Gordon's day.

Playing happy families is not the way to the nation's heart

Gordon Brown had the grace to look uneasy at his photo opportunity. Quite right, says Andrew Marr: it's none of our business



Not married, and the child is borrowed for the occasion: why do politicians submit themselves to such indignities?

HERE is Gordon Brown, man of the day, on marriage: "It's not something anyone should be forced into." His girlfriend (though the term seems a little too girly for Sarah Macaulay, the dignified and serious lady with whom Brown consorts) merely smiles. The photographers chirrup and whirr.

Meanwhile a small boy – name of Ben, the child of Sue Nye, Brown's political secretary – solemnly munches his way through his third birthday tea between the grown-ups. The irresistible effect of the picture, which was on most front pages yesterday morning, was of a family snapshot. Here they are, Gordon, Sarah and Ben.

No problem. Except, of course, that one problem: the whole world, bar a small clutch of forgotten hunter-gatherers in Wales, knows perfectly that Gordon Brown is single. He has been one of the most bachelors on the planet, touselled, rumpled, work-driven, reticent. If policy-obsessives can be laddish, then he is even mildly laddish. Wonderful stories are told of his former Edinburgh flat, where dust covered every surface, there was nothing in the fridge and his idea of dressing down for the weekend was to swap a red tie for a blue tie.

Certainly, he has not yet announced whether, (never mind when) he will marry Ms Macaulay. He seems in no hurry. Why should he be? But given all this well-known background, the family snapshot must come across as both poignant and impertinent.

Here, after all, are real people with real emotional lives, posing for a pre-Budget photo-opportunity to celebrate the state of family – almost as if they were saying: "We aren't married with a child. But, you never know, we might be; we are those sort of people. We would, at any rate, like you to picture us that way."

But – please – why? Is the world still, after the sexual revolution, and women's liberation (postponed) and the arrival of gay ministers, supposed to be so determined that leaders be married that endless nudge, nudge stories and stagy photo-ops are thought necessary to enhance Budget day?

The circumstances are unusual, admittedly. The Chancellor was the object of a nasty whispering campaign about his sexuality. Rebutting that was the job of his press officer Charlie Whelan. With characteristic

gusto, Mr Whelan then seemed to make his dignified and reserved boss seem like some frantic serial shagger, the living embodiment of erogenous growth theory. Next came endless stories about Ms Macaulay and the imminence of her nuptials, spoilt only by Mr Brown's habit of sloping off to watch football and his frank pleas for a little space and time. She, meanwhile, is in a hellish position, and handling it with extraordinary aplomb.

Damned if they do, damned if they don't? No pictures of Sarah Macaulay would presumably lead to "Sarah snubbed on Gordon's big day". On the other hand, why should they let it all hang out? They aren't trying to promote films or sell records.

So they opted for being vague. Brown says that "marriage is important" and that "I'm sure I'll do it one day", making the whole business sound like passing a driving test. Then came that strange remark about it being wrong to force anyone into marriage.

It's strange only because, these days, almost no one in this country is. One has in one's mind's eye a picture of burly Kirk elders dragging a frantically resisting Chancellor into a soot-grimed church on a hill in Fife. And yet, as a country, we marry less and we marry for fewer years. If we were as family-based as we used to be, there would be no need for four million extra homes. Singles culture is celebrated by television and flattered by advertisers who know how to spot personal disposable income when they see it.

Yet Brown's image-makers seem to disagree. It is partly that a man who will today be changing the incomes of so many families, possibly through mortgage tax relief and child benefit, has to seem as if he knows something about contemporary family budgets, and, therefore, about contemporary family life. He doesn't want to be seen as the dour theoretician of Downing Street. He needs to be homey.

Mr Brown's neighbour in

merely that for politicians, or any other public figures, to respond to this in a substantial way is deadly. To place your emotional life at the service of good PR is coming close to selling your very identity.

I don't believe for a moment that most voters care whether Gordon Brown is going to marry Sarah Macaulay or not. They will read stories about that if such stories are there, and look with some interest at the pic-

nomics than in personal relationships. Other people spend their energy chasing folk round the filing cabinets; he's mostly been too busy reading whatever's in the filing cabinets. Given his job, that is surely reassuring. To his real friends, it is a lovable trait. And only in a strangely sex-obsessed and voyeuristic age would this be thought so worthy of disapproving comment.

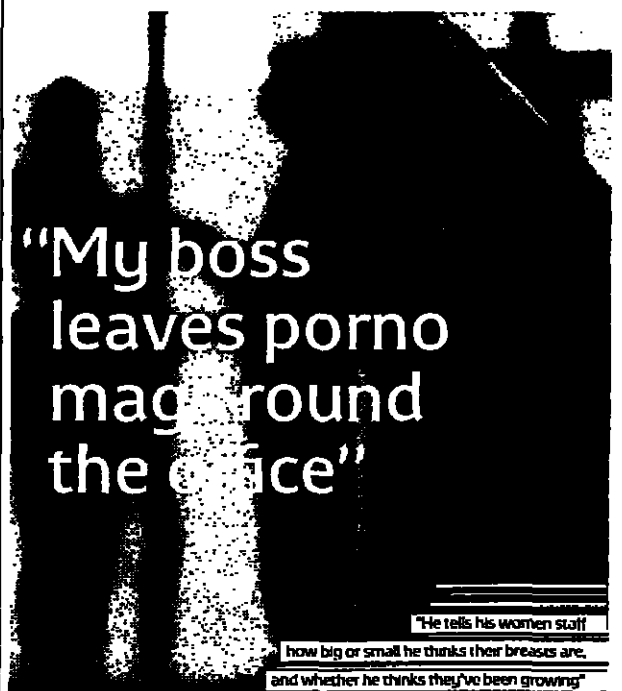
At any rate, his married state isn't going to affect a single vote or change a single mind when today's Budget is unveiled. People in families will applaud Brown if he helps their weekly incomes and curse him if he taketh away. No photo-calls with children or coy hints about forthcoming marriage will sway those reactions. We are not so babyish that we can be bought off by the thought of the Chancellor's bride – not when he affects our pockets. Ministers should not think that suiting the press means pleasing the voters.

So maybe the Chancellor will get married and be happy, and that will be fine. I have a vague but unprovable idea that happy politicians are better for us than unhappy ones. But for me the most reassuringly human aspect of Brown's pre-Budget photo-call was his seething unease about the whole damn business.

Are endless nudge, nudge stories and stagy photo-ops still thought necessary to enhance Budget Day?

Downing Street shows how a politician's family can be used positively by the media. The Blairs have become almost a kind of alternative Royal Family for the mid-market press and mid-market television. We know when they change their car. We know which football teams their kids support. The *Daily Mail*, in relatively benign mood, follows the clothes and hairstyles of Cherie with almost as much fascination as it once followed Diana.

These may be ominous echoes, but the press requires recognisable people to at as mannequins for lifestyle journalism. The spouses and children of the famous become handy pegs for articles about education, clothing, holidays, health and furnishing. In return, it is assumed, the famous benefit from the reassuring glow of normality that such pieces confer. My point is



"My boss leaves porno mag round the office"

How big or small he thinks their breasts are, and whether he thinks they've been growing

A newspaper is no ordinary business, it is a trophy asset



ANDREAS
WHITTAM
SMITH

The founder of the 'Independent' says the dream may be over but the future remains bright

FOR ME it was the end of a dream last Wednesday, when Ireland's Independent Newspapers, whose chairman is Dr. Tony O'Reilly, announced that agreement had been reached on purchasing the outstanding shares in Newspaper Publishing, which owns *The Independent*.

One of the objectives of the founders of the newspaper was to operate with a wide spread of shareholders and to do without the traditional tycoon-proprietor. In the event, however, I did not feel disconsolate; rather the reverse. I was delighted. The newspaper had been saved.

But how did we get to this point? In 1986 we raised the £18m capital with which the newspaper was launched from 30 or so pensions funds, unit trusts, life assurance funds and the like. We placed a limit on the size of individual shareholdings. Nobody could build up a position and take over, or so we thought. Among the first shareholders, however, there lurked one individual whose presence was even more significant than we first believed – Robert Maxwell. His subscription had been disguised by contriving that an investment company would bid for the shares he wanted. We were horrified by his presence, but we failed to see that it was an ex-

ample of a general rule: national newspapers are trophy assets. Like say, luxury hotels or football teams, owning them confers prestige.

This misapprehension was part, if you like, of a greater error. We understood well enough the iron law – no profits, no independence. But in 1986 we felt entitled to assume that, for the first time in many years, newspapers had become a normal business. Mrs Thatcher had so weakened the trades unions by removing their legal privileges, that the print workers could no longer maintain their stranglehold and Rupert Murdoch had demonstrated their sudden loss of power by his success in decamping from Fleet Street to Wapping in east London, leaving behind his unionised employees.

It first became evident during the severe recession of the early 1990s that the assumption of normality was unsafe. This slowdown in economic activity was particularly painful for newspapers. It wasn't confined to industrial workers in the Midlands and the North as so often in the past; it hit the middle classes (and the South-East) head on. Its impact upon advertising revenues was devastating and its effect upon circulation income was also adverse. Newspaper Publishing

proceeded to do what normal businesses do in such circumstances. They cut out any activities whose benefits, seen in a harsh light, appear marginal. They forgo new initiatives. They reduce costs where they can.

We did all those things. Our competitors, however, did not. They didn't cut back at all. That is the point about trophy assets; their owners willingly pay for their upkeep, even in hard times. At all events, we began to feel squeezed. We had made matters more difficult for ourselves by launching the *Independent* on Sunday just before the recession began. Having made good profits, we fell into loss.

We became short of capital. The iron law began to operate. Not all our existing shareholders were prepared to subscribe new equity. I didn't blame them. Pension funds, unit trusts and similar financial institutions are unmoved by the supposed prestige of owning a national newspaper. Their fiduciary duties force them, quite rightly, to focus solely on the outlook for profits and dividends. The point had thus arrived at which we would have to seek a new type of shareholder. If we wished to avoid being bought by a single individual, such as the late Sir James Goldsmith, or Mr Tiny

Rowland, or Mr Mohammed Al Fayed, or whoever, we would have to turn to other newspaper companies, so long as they were not rivals. They could bring us expertise as well as fresh capital. The first two newspapers to join the shareholding group were *La Repubblica* of Italy and *El Pais* of Spain. Strengthened by the capital they subscribed and helped by an easing of the recession, the losses were trimmed back and we began to operate at break-even. In financial terms, we were stretched but viable.

The events which led to last week's change of ownership began one Friday evening, on the very day when I had asked our financial director whether he agreed with me that we could get by without seeking a further capital injection. He replied in the affirmative but within an hour or two we discovered how wrong we were.

Rupert Murdoch announced that *The Times* was to reduce its cover price. A new sort of war had begun. Circulation revenues fell sharply. Losses mounted. Independent Newspapers, publishers of *The Irish Independent* and *The Sunday Independent*, and Mirror Group, bought out the original shareholders and injected fresh capital. Once again losses were

hailed back. Until finally Mirror Group, seeing that its share price appeared adversely affected by its holding in Newspaper Publishing, whose newspapers are so different in style to its own, decided to sell its holding to the Irish group, which took the opportunity to buy out the other shareholders, including *El Pais*. The *Independent* and the *Independent on Sunday* have fallen in with the rest of Fleet Street in having a single owner. End of experiment.

For everybody involved, the recent years have always been demanding, never less than exhausting and often traumatic. The saving grace, however, has been that the newspapers have never once fallen short of the aspiration enunciated by their titles – to be independent. To my knowledge, no shareholder has ever tried to influence the reporting of the news or the opinions expressed. I believe this will remain the case. The new owner is the largest publisher of broadsheet newspapers in the world, employing more than 2,000 journalists in Ireland, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. As well as integrity, it brings two boons, stability and resources. That is why I look forward with optimism while regretting the dream unrealised.

Debbie used to work in porn. This is what she told the *TUC* last November. Debbie is not rich but she is a bit of a star. She is now in the *TUC*.

River magazine used the staff for a long time. This book is a collection of the most interesting and most popular of the magazine's past. It is a collection of the most interesting and most popular of the magazine's past.

You need to be able to call on the provisions of a union. The right to have their union recognised and to have a say in the way the union is run is a basic right.

That's why the Government is right to bring forward new laws to protect the right to join a union.

Debbie deserves the right to be heard.

Debbie is not rich but she is a bit of a star. She is now in the *TUC*. This book is a collection of the most interesting and most popular of the magazine's past. It is a collection of the most interesting and most popular of the magazine's past.



Golden handshake boosted Lord Simon's BP pay packet to £599,000

By Michael Harrison

LORD SIMON of Highbury, who resigned as chairman of BP last May to take up a ministerial post in Tony Blair's government, received £599,000 from the company in 1997, including a discretionary payment of £240,000 in recognition of his 36 years service.

BP's annual report and accounts show that Lord Simon received a fixed fee of £326,000 for his four months employment with the company and shares worth a fur-

ther £273,000, paid out under BP's long-term performance plan.

Lord Simon's total pay from BP was almost six times the amount Mr Blair drew as Prime Minister and nearly 12 times the amount he was entitled to as a minister of state in the House of Lords.

Lord Simon has waived his entitlement to the £51,838 salary he is allowed to draw as Minister for Trade and Competitiveness in Europe. However, he continues to receive a pension from BP.

A BP spokesman said the decision to

make the ex gratia payment of £240,000 to Lord Simon was not unusual. "The board decided to give him an honorarium, which is quite common when people retire from BP."

Shortly after taking up the post Lord Simon was criticised by John Redwood, the shadow trade and industry secretary, for failing to disclose his ownership of BP shares. He subsequently sold all his 275,688 shares in the company in August, including those awarded last year under the long-term performance plan.

Lord Simon took advice from the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Trade and Industry on his BP shares. He did not sell them immediately because he entered government because he was in possession of price-sensitive information, but nor did he transfer them to a blind trust as other ministers have done in the past. The profit made on his BP shares between May and August was donated to charity.

The annual report also shows John Browne, BP's chief executive, took home £1.76m, including £821,000 awarded to him

under the company's long-term performance plan. This year he stands to receive a maximum award worth £815,000 under the scheme.

The 365 BP executives who are participating in the plan stand to receive shares worth £22m this year. Awards under the scheme are based on growth in total shareholder return.

In the three years from 1995 to 1997 - the period over which the 1998 award will be based - BP's total shareholder return was 19.5 per cent, beating the market.

In 1996 Mr Browne's total remuneration was higher at £2.46m but this included a £1.72m payment under a previous five-year incentive scheme.

Mr Browne's remuneration, excluding his long-term share award, rose by 25 per cent to £938,000, reflecting the bumper year enjoyed by BP.

Replacement cost profit before exceptional items rose by 13 per cent to £2.822bn, return on capital employed reached 17 per cent and BP's debt ratio fell to 23 per cent - half its level four years ago.

Retail dip threatens Sports Division float

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

THERE is growing concern that the £350m flotation of Sports Division, the sports retailer, may have to be postponed because of the recent slowdown in sales on the high street. There is a crunch meeting later this week between the company and its advisers where they will decide how best to proceed.

Some analysts said it looked increasingly unlikely the fast-growing group would come to the market in April or May as originally planned. This timing had been seen as auspicious with the World Cup coming up in June.

Any postponement would be a significant blow not just for the company but the whole sports goods sector which has enjoyed a huge boom on the back of the rising popularity of brands like Adidas, Reebok and Nike.

But it is thought that sales have been slower since Christmas and the whole retail sector has been suffering from the impact of higher interest rates. Sports Division's shops have been holding big clearance sales, indicating that they have been struggling to shift unsold stock.

John Richards, at the company's broker NatWest Securities,

said the timing of the float had never been stated, but said: "We will go when the market conditions are right. The timetable is not set in stone."

The company would not comment on the possibility of its float being pulled. However, a spokesman added: "Sports Division does not have an absolute requirement to float because the company can comfortably fund its aggressive expansion programme through cashflow. It can pick its moment as to when it floats."

Nick Bubb, retail analyst at SG Securities said: "If demand is slackening which may be due to changing fashion trends or the wider economic backdrop, and the supply is increasing because of the aggressive expansion plans of these companies, then that is bound to affect profitability."

US bookseller plans joint venture with Ottakar ahead of flotation

BARNES & NOBLE, the American bookseller, is looking to enter the UK book market through a joint venture with Ottakar's, the British chain that is planning a stock market flotation next month, writes Nigel Cope. The two companies have held discussions about working together on opening large book superstores in town centres.

It is also understood that Barnes & Noble looked closely at both Dillons and Waterstones about possibly buying one or both of the chains before they joined forces as part of the new HMV Media Group.

The move would trigger a major shake-up in the UK book

market which has consolidated over the last six months. It could spark a price war as it has built its reputation on cutting prices in order to drive sales higher and build market share.

James Henshaw, Ottakar's managing director, would not confirm the talks but said: "We know the people at Barnes & Noble and we talk to them from time to time. But we are committed to the flotation and we believe this is the best way to take advantage of the opportunities in this dynamic market."

Barnes & Noble has been looking at the UK market for some time and had a team of staff here last year looking at potential sites.

"These companies sell the same stuff at the same prices and there is not a lot to distinguish one from the other. The market has been uneasy for some time about the amount of new space they are adding and demand has cooled since Christmas. That is not a happy background for a big float like Sports Division."

Sports Division has more than 250 stores and was transformed by the purchase of the Olympus Sports shops from Sears in 1995. Philip Green, the former Amber Day chairman, brokered that deal and now has a 13 per cent stake in Sports Division as a result.

It is understood that when the company floats Mr Green has given an undertaking to sell his entire holding. It is possible that if the company decides to delay its float, Mr Green's stake may be acquired by the company or by institutions.

Sports Division, led by the chief executive Tom Hunter, has been battling with rival sports retailers such as JJB Sports, John David Sports, All Sport and First Sport, which is part of Blacks Leisure.

It is expected to record sales of £310m this year. Its financial adviser is SBC Warburg Dillon Read with NatWest Securities acting as stockbroker.



Tom Hunter, Sports Division chief executive (left), with Jackie Stewart, former racing driver

Staveley chief quits on profit warning

By Peter Thal Larsen

STAVELEY, the troubled engineering and minerals group, yesterday announced the departure of its chief executive along with a profit warning and the long-awaited sale of its two measurement businesses.

Shares in the group fell 9p to 122p as it revealed that the disposals would cause it to report a pre-tax loss of £74m for the year to 28 March.

The company said Roy Hitchens had ceased to be chief executive "with immediate effect" and the process of finding a replacement had already started. In the meantime Harry Tulley, the chairman, will take over the running of the minerals division while Bob Brown, the finance director, will run the services division.

"Roy began to feel an inability to put the problems right," Mr Tulley said. "He was losing shareholders' confidence."

Mr Hitchens, who was on a two-year rolling contract, was paid close to £600,000 last year. However, Mr Tulley said that this was swelled by pension contributions and that discussions about his pay-off, which had only just started, would only take his basic salary of about £250,000 a year into account.

Staveley has long been criticised by institutional investors for its performance. Guinness Peat Group, the aggressive investment group run by Sir Ron Brierley, has 11.5 per cent of the shares.

Last night Blake Nixon, a director of GPG, said the announcement was "rather disappointing" adding that GPG would be considering its position. "The financial control has clearly been weak," he said.

Staveley has been trying to sell the weighing businesses since last year, when it decided to focus on its services activities. Its Weigh-Tronix subsidiary is to be sold to a management team backed by Berkshire Partners for £44m in cash. But Staveley could not find a buyer for Chronos Richardson. As a result, the company had decided to turn over the division to its management and to ring-fence the possible losses, which could amount to about £7m. But Mr Tulley said that option was much cheaper than closing down the business.

Analysis said the shortfall at Staveley's services division was more worrying. The company said a new management team at Integral, its facilities services business, had reduced the value of work in progress and written off debts with a value of £3.2m. As a result, Staveley Services is expected to make a profit of just £100,000 in the year to March.

US bidders for Energy clash over \$2.8bn Texas share plan

By Michael Harrison

A FRESH WAR of words broke out last night between the rival US bidders for Energy Group after one of them, Texas Utilities, was forced to disclose that it may issue shares worth up to \$2.8bn to help finance its offer for the company.

The rival bidder PacifiCorp said the statement, made at the request of the Takeover Panel, raised questions about whether Texas could issue that amount of equity. PacifiCorp's advisers also suggested it cast doubt on Texas' ability to finance the \$10bn debt facility it is using to finance the bid.

Texas is bidding \$40p a share for Energy Group, the parent company of Eastern Electricity, valuing the company at \$4.45bn. This compared with an \$20p-a-share bid from PacifiCorp.

Texas, which is advised by Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch, will pay out a total of \$237m in fees if its bid succeeds. This is about twice the level of fees being paid by PacifiCorp, which is advised by Goldman Sachs.

The Texas offer trumped a \$20p-a-share bid from PacifiCorp. However, PacifiCorp already has regulatory approval for its bid while Texas will have to wait until next month to see whether it has escaped a referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

PacifiCorp also questioned why the full extent of Texas' plans for issuing equity were not disclosed in its offer document, when it was published last week.

A Texas spokesman responded by saying: "We are delighted to have been given the opportunity to demonstrate that we have the capacity to issue equity, unlike others."

Texas said that the \$2.8bn would be made up of \$1.5bn of equity and the balance in preference and convertible securities. The company has already said that up to 20 per cent of its offer could be met by issuing shares. At the time of its bid it also indicated its intention to issue about \$1.4bn of new equity after it had acquired Energy Group.

If it raises as much as \$2.8bn in shares, then nearly 40 per cent of the bid will have

been equity financed. PacifiCorp's bid is 25-30 per cent equity financed.

About 20 per cent of Energy Group's shares are held by US investors in the form of American Depositary Receipts.

However, it is highly unlikely that all these shareholders will take Texas paper whilst virtually all the UK institutions are guaranteed to take the cash.

Texas is paying its two financial advisers, Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch, \$20m in advisory fees. However, its offer document shows that total fees, costs and expenses associated with the offer will be £144m or £237m.

The credit facility has been arranged by Lehman, Merrill Lynch and Chase Manhattan. Eric Nye, chairman of Texas, said the acquisition of Energy Group was consistent with its strategy of delivering long-term earnings growth. However, PacifiCorp challenged Texas to say whether the deal would be earnings enhancing or dilutive if it issued as much as \$2.8bn in new equity.

Yorkshire moves to deter carpetbaggers

By Andrew Verity

YORKSHIRE Building Society is looking at introducing a new scheme to beat off carpetbaggers which aims to turn all new savers into long-term account holders.

The move would encourage new savers not to withdraw money for at least two years - or miss a large bonus paid to long-term savers. This would deter short-term carpetbaggers from withdrawing money immediately after a windfall gain.

Yorkshire last year attempted to stop carpetbaggers disrupting its business by boosting its minimum opening balance to

£2,000 on share accounts - the accounts which give members a chance to vote on whether to float a society.

Smaller savers have been offered deposit accounts with no votes and no entitlement to a windfall. But from July, the Building Societies Act 1997 will bar Yorkshire from offering non-voting accounts unless customers insist on them. Unless Yorkshire drops the minimum balance, it could cut itself out of the market for small savers.

David Anderson, chief executive of the Yorkshire, said: "After July we can only offer share accounts and not the deposit accounts we have offered

to smaller savers. That could mean we lose our ability to offer accounts to small savers, which is not a position we want to be in."

The scheme, which is one of several options being considered, would mean that long-term savings accounts would become the staple product of the Yorkshire.

The society, which has more than a million members, admitted the scheme would not stop members voting for conversion. But it would stop votes being distorted by temporary members who stayed only to wait for a windfall.

Other options to put off

carpetbaggers include adopting a tactic used by rival building society Nationwide, where new savers have to sign away their windfall rights to charity. Yorkshire would use the same method but would give members their windfall rights back after a set number of years.

The Yorkshire yesterday said its mortgage customers had already saved more over two years in lower rates than customers of Bristol & West received in windfall payouts. A customer with a £50,000, variable rate mortgage, had saved £420.92 compared with customers of the Halifax.

Mr Anderson added that

Misconduct findings condemn former top UK accountants

By Roger Trapp

THE ACCOUNTANCY profession has brought to a close one of the darkest chapters in British corporate history with the announcement of findings of professional misconduct against a firm that was formerly one of the UK's leading chartered accountants, and three individuals.

The Joint Disciplinary Scheme last night said its tri-

bunal had censured Spicer & Oppenheim, which subsequently became part of what is now Deloitte & Touche, and ordered it to pay £100,000 towards the costs of its executive counsel after finding evidence of omissions in its audit of Atlantic Computers. Serious contingent liabilities in the 1980s accounts brought down the leasing firm and contributed to the collapse of its parent company, British

& Commonwealth Holdings, in 1990.

The tribunal also ordered that Peter Goldie, at the time a director of both companies, be censured and excluded from the Institute of Chartered Accountants for his role in the presentation of Atlantic's misleading 1988 accounts and B&C's misleading 1989 interim statement.

At the same time, the disciplinary scheme, the body that in-

vestigates the most serious allegations against members of the accountancy profession, censured two former directors of the group of companies headed by the late Robert Maxwell.

They are Michael Stoney, a director of Mirror Group Newspapers in 1991, and Jonathan Ford, former finance director of the Maxwell-related company London and Bishopsgate Investment Management.

A day in the markets

STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5785.10	2.80	0.05	5861.50	4188.10	3.38
FTSE 250	5387.80	10.20	0.19	5381.00	4284.20	3.90
FTSE 350	5779.60	2.10	0.04	5803.20	4078.70	3.51
FTSE All Share	5710.61	2.23	0.04	5725.26	2968.07	3.29
FTSE SmallCap	2459.90	5.00	0.20	2554.90	2182.10	2.88
FTSE Fledgling	1391.60	5.90	0.43	1385.70	1222.20	3.28
FTSE AIM	1042.40	10.90	1.06	1127.80	885.50	1.06
Dow Jones	8870.03	86.75	0.78	8858.42	6958.75	1.61
Nikkei	15881.14	-189.00	-1.17	20810.79	14488.21	0.92
Hong Kong	11181.54	124.51	1.13	18800.51	7808.13	3.43
S&P 500	4683.65	-5.80	-0.12	4959.60	3192.35	1.84

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling	UK 10 year gilt	US long bond
3 month 1 yr disc	1 year 10 year	1 yr 5 yr 10 yr
UK 7.25 1.30 7.52 0.84 5.91 -1.43 5.94 -1.58		
US 5.98 0.19 5.78 -0.33 5.88 -1.16 5.87 -1.08		
Japan 0.71 0.20 0.68 0.09 1.17 -0.85 2.36 -0.88		
Germany 3.51 0.25 3.73 0.54 4.88 -0.83 5.44 -1.05		

Bond Yields	1 yr	5 yr	10 yr
UK 7.25 1.30 7.52 0.84 5.91 -1.43 5.94 -1.58			
US 5.98 0.19 5.78 -0.33 5.88 -1.16 5.87 -1.08			
Japan 0.71 0.20 0.68 0.09 1.17 -0.85 2.36 -0.88			
Germany 3.51 0.25 3.73 0.54 4.88 -0.83 5.44 -1.05			

MAIN PRICE CHANGES	Value	% Chg	% Chg
Plasma	408.00	27.00	7.05
Orange	127.50	8.00	6.68
Body Shop Int	526.52	39.20	7.45
Carve	467.00	24.00	5.12
CRF Group	467.00	24.00	5.12

CURRENCIES

\$/£	DM/£	¥/£
at 1m	at 1m	at 1m
1.6670 -0.0076 1.6595	0.8889 -0.0036 0.8853	162.10 -0.1507 1.6194
D-Mark 1.0368 -0.0050 1.0318	D-Mark 1.0368 -0.0050 1.0318	¥ 129.46 -0.1507 129.31
¥ 129.46 -0.1507 129.31	¥ 129.46 -0.1507 129.31	
£ Index 108.80 0.00 97.20	£ Index 108.80 0.00 97.20	

OTHER INDICATORS	at 1m	at 1m	at 1m
Brent Oil (\$)	11.82	-0.24	18.50
Gold (\$)	284.25	-1.10	347.75
Silver (\$)	6.12	-0.12	6.22
Base Rates			
Bank of England	5.50		
Base Rates			

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.3964	Italy (lira)	2.90
Austria (schillings)	20.68	Japan (yen)	222.83
Belgium (francs)	60.70	Malta (lira)	0.6376
Canada (\$)	2.2958	Netherlands (guilders)	3.342
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8560	Norway (kroner)	0.32
Denmark (kroner)	11.29	Portugal (escudos)	208.93
Finland (markka)	8.9923	Spain (pesetas)	248.53
France (francs)	9.8565	South Africa (rand)	7.9408
Germany (marks)	2.9531	Sweden (kroner)	0.291
Greece (drachmes)	334.42	Switzerland (francs)	2.3984
Hong Kong (\$)	0.52	Turkey (lira)	378.44
Ireland (pounds)	1.699	USA (\$)	1.6287

Source: Thomas Cook
Rates for indication purposes only

سكاي نت الاجل



OUTLOOK ON THE NEW CODE. FOR FISCAL STABILITY. OWNERSHIP OF THE BBC, AND EMERSON'S BATTLE WITH MINORITY SHAREHOLDERS

One of the great spectator sports for observers of Ken Clarke's Budgets was guessing how many years he would put off his promise of a balanced budget. It turned out that the Clarkian "medium term", when spending and revenues would balance, was a rolling concept. It was always four years from the instant he stood up in the House of Commons, whisky in hand, to set out his latest plans.

In contrast to this "virtue later" approach, Gordon Brown trumpets austerity now. What's more, he is going to make sure every future chancellor follows the same path of righteousness. The Code for Fiscal Stability will legislate for prudent Budgets forever. Each chancellor will be able to choose his own particular rules, whether that means keeping borrowing within the level of public investment (Mr Brown's "golden rule") or the "three" preferred goal of government spending shrinking as a share of the economy. But they will all have to have a rule, publish it, and show how well they are matching up to it.

The new code is meant to do for fiscal policy what Bank of England independence has done for monetary policy. The intention is to subject the government's tax and spending plans to unprecedented scrutiny.

It's hard to quarrel with this ambition. But what will the new code achieve in practice? Would it, for that matter, have changed the Ken Clarke approach? The answer has to be perhaps but not necessarily. Extra scrutiny of a mass of Treasury documents by parliament and the

National Audit Office would have made it a bit more embarrassing for him to postpone his target year after year. It would also have made pre-election tax cuts, like those introduced before the 1992 election, far more transparent and therefore less worth gambling on.

But what a stability code can never do is prevent the kind of economic shocks that overturn the most prudent plans. Recessions will always send government borrowing soaring. Nor can any code ensure that the Treasury's forecasts for the economy and borrowing turn out to be correct.

In the end the Brown proposal amounts to little more than window dressing. No Chancellor ever wants to run an irresponsible policy, even if some of them have been easily tempted into it when there's an election to win. These days the capital markets tend to keep governments on the straight and narrow far better than any rule is ever capable of doing. Furthermore, what seems right for today can often seem wholly inappropriate tomorrow. Government's always need to leave room for some flexibility. Even so, the code shows good intentions and is therefore generally to be welcomed.

Leave Auntie just as she is

Nobody doubts the size of the management task facing John Birt, director general of the BBC. In some respects the BBC's licence fee is every chief executive's dream

- a guaranteed source of income into the indefinite future. Unfortunately this unique, hypothecated tax is not all upside. The fixed licence fee means there is limited scope for growing revenue, which in turn necessitates spreading a fixed pool of money more and more thinly in the fight for audience. Furthermore, from this year onwards the Beeb will be spending a tenth of its revenue annually on the conversion to digital. That means less money for programming, less money for touting increasingly fierce competition.

All the same, it is not clear that making the BBC into an institution mutually owned by licence fee payers - as suggested in a new booklet by the Institute for Public Policy Research, a left leaning think tank - would solve the problem. There would be some potential advantages, obviously. Removing the BBC from public ownership would allow the BBC to raise debt without affecting the level of public sector borrowing or going the whole hog of privatisation, though for what purpose the IPPR doesn't say. And mutual ownership might make licence-fee payers feel more attached to the BBC as well as making the BBC more answerable to its viewers.

But in the end the proposal suffers from a fundamental flaw - you cannot privatise a tax without allowing people the right to opt out of it. The virtue of the present licence fee system - which is unique to Britain - is its attributes as a flat rate tax, affordable to all, capable of funding a basic level of quality, public service broadcasting. The moment the BBC

is removed from the public sector, a sizeable minority, possibly swelling over time to a majority, is going to start wondering why they should be paying a licence fee at all when they spend their lives watching Sky, down the gym or loitering on street corners.

Furthermore, it is questionable that we actually want the BBC independently tapping the capital markets for extra sources of income. The BBC is already a monopoly broadcaster in the UK with nearly a half of the total TV and radio market. That's enough for any organisation, even one producing such lasting monuments of our age as Teletubbies and Eastenders. Nothing would be gained by attempting to make it more dominant still. The BBC is perfectly all right as it is, thanks very much.

Pyrrhic victory for Astec institutions

At first glance, Emerson Electric's decision to allow its subsidiary Astec (BSR) to pay a final dividend is a victory for institutional shareholders. Two months ago Emerson threatened any minority shareholder in Astec who did not accept the US behemoth's offer of 111p a share with a complete suspension of dividends. Now it's performed a U-turn and even proposed that one of the directors it voted off the board a week ago be allowed back on. Has all the criticism heaped on Emerson and its blue-blooded advisers finally made them blush?

Er, not really. In fact, Emerson's move rather neatly undermines the court case that aggrieved institutional shareholders have brought against it. The institutions argue that suspending the dividend unfairly prejudices the rights of minority shareholders and the Companies Act forbids that. But Emerson has paid a dividend. Ergo, the institutions' case is groundless.

Whether this particular ruse fools a High Court judge remains to be seen. In the meantime, however, Emerson is showing no signs of softening its hard-nosed stance. It has pulled out of talks with Astec's independent directors after the two sides failed to agree a price. Given that Emerson was apparently willing to increase its offer by a whole 7p a share, that's hardly surprising. The Emerson appointees on Astec's board have also banned the four independent directors from speaking to anyone without their permission. Hardly the behaviour of a corporation that has seen the error of its ways.

So the law is now the institutions' only hope, and a fairly flimsy one at that. But whatever the outcome of the case, it's clear that the "Takeover Code" needs changing. The current rules are designed to prevent a bidder from getting above 30 per cent without making a full offer. The rules should require any company wishing to breach the 50 per cent threshold to make a full offer at the same price as it is buying shares. That would have required Emerson to make a bid at 153p when it raised its stake last March above 50 per cent. What the institutions would give for that price now.

Emerson changes tactics in battle with Astec investors

By Peter Thal Larsen

EMERSON Electric, the US giant which is battling to take full control of Astec (BSR), the electronic components group, yesterday changed its stance on Astec's dividend and board in an attempt to improve its chances of winning the long-running battle with Astec's minority shareholders.

Meanwhile, Emerson also revealed that talks with Astec's independent directors about securing their recommendation for an offer had broken down. Emerson and its advisers are understood to have been willing to offer about 118p per share, compared to an earlier indicative offer of 111p. However,

Astec's independent directors had held out for more. "These discussions have now been terminated," Emerson said yesterday. The news pushed Astec shares down 4p to 117p.

In a statement, Astec's board, which is now controlled by Emerson nominees, said it had decided to pay a final dividend. Emerson had previously threatened the company's minority shareholders that it was considering cutting the dividend completely.

Astec's final dividend has been revised from 1.41p to 1.25p, making a total dividend of 1.94p. This is still an increase of 7.8 per cent over 1996.

Last night, City experts said

the move was a clear attempt by Emerson to undermine the court case that institutional shareholders in Astec have started against the US company. The institutions have argued that Emerson's threat to cut the dividend unfairly prejudices their interests. They also allege that a director nominated by Emerson forced the company to report a lower interim profit figure last August.

Emerson said it rejected the allegations and that it was seeking to have the petition dismissed. The company yesterday applied to the High Court to strike out the proceedings.

In a further development,

Astec announced that it would ask for Neal Stewart, the group's technical director who was one of the company's founders, to be reinstated to the board at the company's annual general meeting. Mr Stewart was one of Astec's three executive directors who was voted off the board by Emerson at an extraordinary general meeting last week.

A spokesman for Emerson said that Astec had a limit of 10 directors, requiring it to replace three directors with its own appointees to get a majority. Now that it had a majority, it would seek to increase the number of board members, allowing it to bring back Mr Stewart.

Outlook, this page

Jakarta 'cabinet from hell' ponders IMF terms

By Stephen Vines in Hong Kong

MIXED SIGNALS emerged from the controversial new Indonesian ministers as they were sworn into office yesterday - dubbed the "cabinet from hell" - while the international community waited for signs Jakarta might take a more conciliatory attitude on implementing economic and financial reform.

Jusuf Habibie, the new vice-president, told visiting Tokyo officials that his country could implement all but two provisions in a 50-point programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in exchange for a \$43bn (£26bn) bail-out.

President Suharto said last week that many of the IMF's conditions ran contrary to the country's constitution and therefore could not be implemented. Mr Habibie was yesterday reported as saying that 40 of the reforms could be implemented soon and eight others could be adopted after some revision. But he stated that monopolies on the spice trade and on agricultural products other than rice could not be scrapped.

But Mohamed "Bob" Hasan, the new trade and industry minister, and close business associate of the Suharto family, who holds the lucrative timber trade monopoly, said such monopolies sometimes served the public

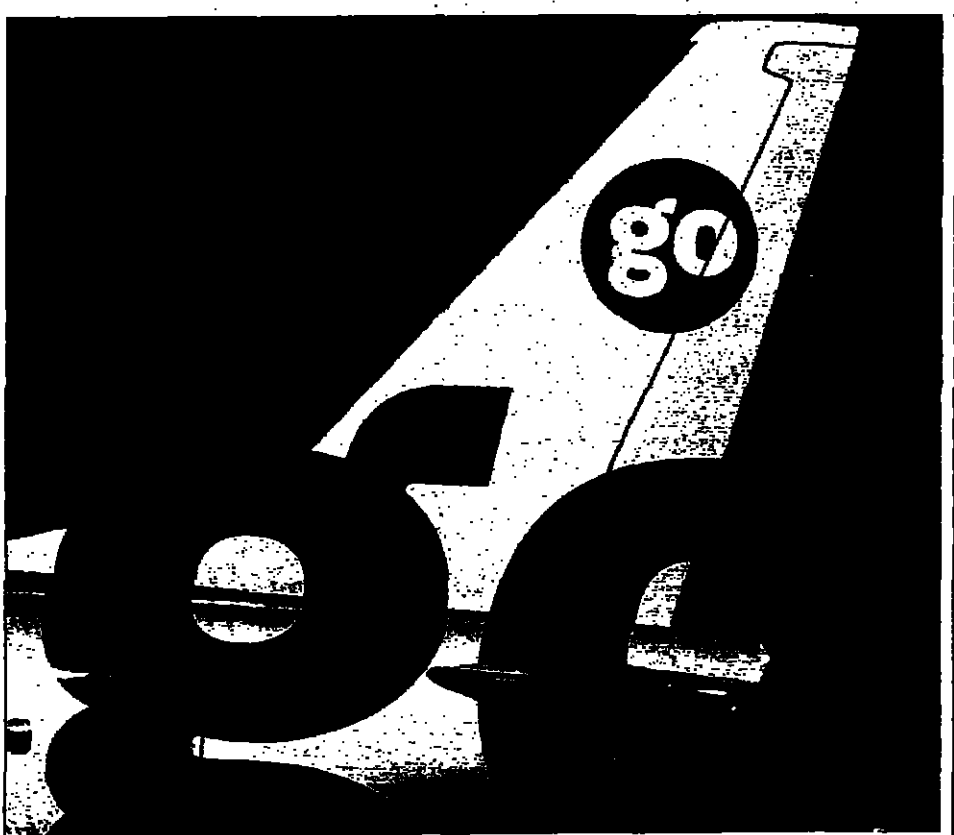
interest. The IMF sees market liberalisation as a key aspect of economic reform. "Some monopolies help the people," he said, without being more specific.

Speaking yesterday in Hong Kong, Adam Schwarz, an Indonesia expert at the US-based Council on Foreign Relations, said bluntly that "the Indonesian economy is not on the brink of collapse, it is already collapsing".

He cited the mounting pressures of inflation, now in the range of 200-300 per cent, the virtual cessation of imports because of the lack of foreign banks prepared to accept Indonesian letters of credit and the breakdown of the internal distribution system.

Mr Schwarz said that the corporate sector was "functionally bankrupt" and would even be so if the local currency appreciated in value by 50 per cent. Moreover there was even worse news to come because corporate debt accounted for around 80 per cent of Indonesia's foreign debt. Most of this debt had been saved from default by short-term borrowings which will mature next month and in May, triggering yet another liquidity crunch and possible defaults.

While economic problems were multiplying Mr Schwarz sensed a "large gap between how the outside world and the Indonesian leadership perceives the crisis".



Union officials are furious that BA has provoked a bitter recruitment battle

Go 'beauty contest' triggers chaos among airline unions

By Barrie Clement Labour Editor

GO, the cut-price offshoot of British Airways expected to start services in May, is facing a chaotic scramble for members among competing unions after a split emerged between the main labour organisations.

Some unions yesterday declared their readiness to enter a "beauty contest" arranged by the company to see who should represent employees, while others have refused to have anything to do with it on principle.

The deep difference of opinion means that while one union may be selected by management to represent staff, others will be actively recruiting employees in order to undermine the whole industrial relations system.

The Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union and the MSF white collar union have decided to make presentations to management in an attempt to be chosen as the single union to represent staff, but the Transport & General and the GMB general union are bitterly opposed to the arrangement. The latter argue that employees should choose which organisations they want to represent them, not employers. An MSF source said that his organisation would rather participate in a beauty contest than allow Go to become a non-union company.

Management wants the successful union to acquiesce over a three-year pay freeze and to agree to a system in which up to one-third of employees' remuneration is made up of per-

formance-related pay. Union officials also point out that rates of pay at Go will be 20-30 per cent below those at the parent company BA.

Sean Keating, a national official at the GMB, has already launched a campaign to recruit Go staff together with non-union members at competing cut-price airlines. Debonair, Ryanair and easyJet. He said he was "disappointed" that sister unions had decided to participate in the process. "When we recruit members at Go, it will be irrespective of any agreement reached by management with another union," he said.

George Ryde, national officer at the T&G, pointed out that his union were the largest in the industry and would be seeking members at the new airline.

Brown lays down law on fiscal prudence

By Diane Coyle Economics Editor

GORDON BROWN polished his Iron Chancellor image yesterday by announcing that governments will in future be required by law to run a prudent fiscal policy.

Confirmation of his intention to introduce a Code for Fiscal Stability came a day ahead of a Budget expected to be tough on spending and borrowing. Although the government's finances are in better shape than he predicted as recently as November, the Chancellor has made it plain he will not ease his tax and spending plans.

The new code will subject levels of tax and expenditure to stricter parliamentary and public scrutiny. It is intended to mirror the transparency in interest rate policy resulting from the Bank of England's independence since last May.

The Chancellor is determined to prevent the British economy from reverting to its old pattern of boom and bust. His proposals got a guarded welcome yesterday.

Kevin Darlington at ABN Amro said: "It does open up fiscal policy to much greater scrutiny." Simon Briscoe at Nikko Europe said firm rules would be helpful, but added: "It is only a way of dressing up what is already accepted practice."

Mr Brown has indicated that if there is leeway for any increase in spending, he will make sure this takes place in the second half of Labour's term of office. But he is determined to refute allegations he is being tough on spending now simply to build up a pre-election "war chest".

Outlook, this page



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Gallaher allegations hit UK tobacco firms

By Andrew Yates

MORE THAN £186m was wiped off the value of the two biggest British tobacco groups yesterday after allegations emerged over the weekend that Gallaher, supplier of brands such as Benson & Hedges and Silk Cut, knew smoking caused cancer almost 30 years ago.

Shares in Gallaher fell 19p to 335p and Imperial Tobacco's stock gave up 10.5p to 401.5p amid fears that the documents would increase the chance of successful litigation against the two tobacco giants.

Anti-smoking campaigners claimed an internal confidential memo from Gallaher's former general manager of research to its managing director proved the group knew smoking caused cancer as far back as 1970. The research executive concluded that independent research using beagles in the late 1960s "proves beyond all reasonable doubt the causation of lung cancer by smoke" and that the research "would appear to

remove the controversy regarding the causation of the majority of human lung cancer."

Leigh Day, the solicitors representing 52 lung cancer victims in their bid for compensation from Gallaher and Imperial, said yesterday the new evidence significantly raised the chances of mounting a successful legal claim against the industry. "The tobacco companies have always maintained that there is no proven link between smoking and cancer. This blows their defence out of the window," said a spokeswoman for the firm. "This is only one of many documents that will surface over the next few months that will strengthen our case," she added.

Gallaher hit back at the claims, saying the memo had simply been an initial reaction to the research and that it was later discounted by the company after being heavily criticised in the scientific community.

A Gallaher spokesman said: "Our position is that the link between smoking and cancer has not been proved, although we

agree that smoking is a risk factor and that statistics show that if you smoke you are more likely to get certain diseases."

"We have of course been aware of the existence of this memo and its publication now does nothing to change our confidence in our ability to defend ourselves against litigation," he added.

Clive Bates, director of anti-smoking group Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), said: "This is the great beauty of litigation - their internal documents show what they really knew and how they behaved, and their top executives have to take the stand under oath. Litigation means the truth does actually come out and the PR waffle gets taken to pieces."

The next stage in the UK action by lung cancer victims will take place on 3 April when a judge will be named for the case. The full trial is now expected to take place next year, after the claimants recently won the right to fight on under a no-win, no-fee agreement with their solicitors.



Groupe Chez Gerard, the restaurant company, yesterday served up a leap in first half profits as it hailed London as one of the culinary capitals of the world. The group, which includes Chez Gerard, Livebait, Bertorelli's, Soho Soho and Scotts, saw pre-tax profits surge 34 per cent to £1.76m for the 26 weeks to 28 December, from £1.31m a year ago. Neville Abraham,

the chairman and chief executive - pictured above outside Livebait, flanked by Laurence Isaacson (left), the marketing director, and Ian Holder, finance director - said the group had carved a niche in the market. "London now has the reputation of one of the gastronomic capitals of the world because of the variety, quality and number of its restaurants." Photograph: PA

Newcastle chiefs under fire as shares slump by £7m

By Andrew Yates

THE STOCK MARKET value of Newcastle United slumped more than £7m yesterday as the City reacted negatively to newspaper allegations that two directors launched an attack on the club's supporters, players and managers.

The shares fell 5 per cent to 85.5p as outraged fans called for the resignation of the chairman Freddy Shepherd and Douglas Hall, son of former chairman Sir John. The club is now valued at £122m compared to £193m when it was floated at 135p last year.

Newcastle has been beset by a series of problems since it

came to the market which has caused its share price to collapse. Mark Corbridge, the group's former joint chief executive, quit the board last year after just seven months with the club. Soon afterwards, Alan Shearer, the club's star £15m striker suffered a long-term injury and plans for a new £90m stadium had to be shelved because of planning problems.

The group's new management team, led by chief executive Freddie Fletcher, had promised to turn around the disappointing performance including plans for a redeveloped 55,000-seater stadium at St James' Park.

Newcastle are now way off the Premiership title chase, have fallen to a disappointing position in the league and the latest revelations come as a crushing blow to the group's credibility in the City.

Newspaper reports suggested that Newcastle sold the striker Andy Cole to Manchester United for £7m despite the fact that he faced the prospect of a career-threatening knee injury. Manchester United's assistant secretary Ken Ramsden rubbished the claims. "The story is nonsense. When we signed Andy Cole we took all the precautions you would be expected to take in a transfer," he said.

Sun Life & Provincial profits leap as merger savings beat expectations

SUN LIFE & Provincial Holdings, the French-controlled insurer formed from the merger of Sun Life and Axa Equity & Law, yesterday unveiled a 54 per cent jump in pre-tax profits in the year of the merger, writes Andrew Verity.

The group, which is the third largest insurer in the UK, also surprised the City by revealing that savings from the merger were 10 per cent higher than it had hoped.

Shares in the company rose 20p to 580p, valuing it at £4.54bn. Earnings per share jumped by half to 26.8p.

Pre-tax profits rose to £337.7m, 54 per cent more than both groups before the merger.

Operating profits, which exclude gains from the sale of its Irish operations, also grew by 14 per cent.

However, the group warned that while its businesses had done well, the value of new business would be difficult to sustain because of competitive market conditions.

Mark Wood, chief executive of Axa, said: "We don't think that our competitors' pricing is sustainable. What we are saying is that we need to get a balance between margin and volume. We are going for margin rather than volume."

Sun Life & Provincial shares closed at 580p, up 20p.

BTR notches up another £650m worth of disposals

BTR, the industrial conglomerate, yesterday took another step towards reinventing itself as a focused engineering group with confirmation that it had made a further round of disposals worth £650m, writes Terry Macalister.

Its Australian building products businesses and Formica Corporation have been bought in cash by venture capital group, CVC Capital Partners. The Australian business was to be floated on the local stock market but BTR changed its mind, worried about the effect of the Asian economic crisis on Australian stocks.

Two weeks ago BTR announced the sale of its pack-

aging business for £2.2bn to Owens-Illinois. Last year BTR sold its polymers division to a venture capital buyer for £515m.

The moves are part of an ongoing divestment programme announced last September. Proceeds are to be used in the previously announced £2bn return of capital to shareholders.

Profit from Monday's sale after goodwill already written off is £30m. After reinstatement of goodwill the loss is £520m.

BTR said it was "making good progress" selling the main remaining business in its divestment programme - namely MBCL, the US metal building components business.

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Pearson proves doubters wrong

THOSE WHO questioned Marjorie Scardino's ability when she took over as chief executive of Pearson at the end of 1996 have been proved badly wrong. Under her tenure shares in the information and entertainment conglomerate have gained more than a quarter in value. And that's without resorting to the kind of drastic surgery City opinion felt that Pearson needed when she took the helm.

Ms Scardino has made some smart moves. She's pumped £100m into the *Financial Times* to boost sales in the US and continental Europe, and added to Pearson's television assets by splashing out £250m on All American, making of *Baywatch* and *The Price Is Right*. However, she's also had to weather a huge false accounting scam at Penguin.

Meanwhile, disposals have been limited. Though welcome, the sale of Mindscape, the disastrous computer games firm which effectively ended previous chief executive Frank Barlow's tenure, was hardly a tough decision. A few minority shareholdings have been sold, while a few more will be disposed of soon.

Despite Ms Scardino's silence yesterday, the for sale sign also appears to have been hoisted over computer magazine publisher Future. But the suggestion yesterday that she might for now be willing to hang on to stakes in the Lazard investment houses, as well as Madame Tussauds, was enough to wipe 16p off the shares, dragging them down to 960p.

A more important question is what Pearson might be thinking of buying. The Simon & Schuster publishing assets, which are currently being auctioned, are clearly on its wish list. In television, meanwhile, experts believe Pearson needs distribution capacity to go with its content, so it may be in the market for minority stakes in television channels in, say, continental Europe.

Will all this be enough to achieve Ms Scardino's aim of producing double-digit earnings growth and doubling the size of the business in five years? That remains to be seen. The 15 per cent increase in operating profits to £323m reported yesterday was a good start, but will be harder to repeat in future years.

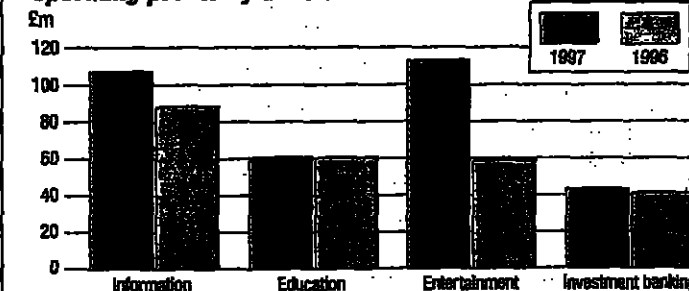
The most important point about Pearson, however, is that without a significant exposure to digital television or new media, its shares rely less on

Pearson: At a glance

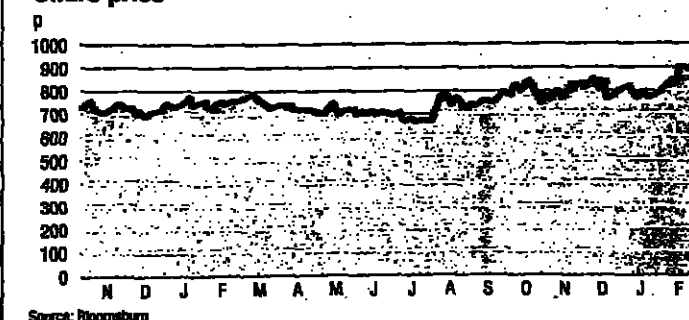
Market value: £15.34bn, share price 950p (-16p)

Five-year record	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£bn)	1.87	1.55	1.83	2.19	2.29
Pre-tax profits (£m)	209	288	385	357	129
Earnings per share (p)	27.00	40.40	47.10	42.90	6.70
Dividends per share (p)	13.00	15.00	16.50	18.00	19.50

Operating profits by division



Share price



Source: Bloomberg

hope that many of its peers in the media sector. Even so, on a multiple of 22 times forecast 1998 earnings, the shares are high enough for now.

Hammerson backs the boom

EVERYBODY in the property industry is wondering just how long the boom will continue. Ron Spinney, Hammerson's chief executive certainly thinks the good times will continue to roll.

Hammerson is putting its money where its mouth is, launching an ambitious expansion programme on the premise that there is still plenty of demand for the right schemes in the right place. It plans to spend £115m out of a total £150m on new UK developments, up from £60m last year. And in

1999 it will plough another £100m into the British property market. The group is concentrating on central London offices and prime shopping centres. It has just bought Britannia House, a site near London's Old Bailey law courts, and is investing a total of £45m to develop the site.

Hammerson certainly has the financial firepower to fund the investment programme. Gearing has fallen to 58 per cent and net assets per share showed a robust 13 per cent increase to 439p. Net rental income rose from £121.6m to £122.7m in 1997, while there was an underlying increase in the value of Hammerson properties of nearly 8.5 per cent.

Hammerson's shares rose 6p to 508.5p yesterday, but still do not look expensive compared to peers. NatWest Securities puts Hammerson on a current net asset value of 456p which represents an 11 per cent premium compared with a 14 per cent average

for the property sector. That said, concerns remain that the UK property cycle is moving to a mature stage, the economy is slowing down, and developers might be expected to be pulling in their horns rather than looking to expand.

And hopes of a blockbuster property merger appear to have faded. Having failed to entice rival MEPC into a merger, it looks like once bitten, twice shy, and Hammerson has ruled out another deal. Hold.

Bunzl on a roll with fresh focus

WHO SAID the paper and packaging sector was dull? Bunzl is producing the sort of growth that the average go-go pharmaceutical stock would be proud of. Its 1997 pre-tax profits rose 11 per cent to £126m, and without the problems caused by the strength of sterling, earnings would have risen by 16 per cent.

Under chairman Anthony Habgood, Bunzl has focused on what it knows best, namely making packaging for supermarkets and supplying plastic caps and plugs. Bunzl has expanded rapidly by buying wisely and its paper operation, traditionally a volatile business, has wisely been slimmed down.

Analysts estimate that Bunzl showed organic growth of 8 per cent last year, no mean feat for a manufacturer and distributor, by picking up share from competitors. This sort of steady growth rate will be difficult to sustain, however it should still be able to expand its existing business by at least 6 per cent a year. And there are plenty of acquisition possibilities, especially in Europe where its chosen markets remain fragmented.

Bunzl is still vulnerable to the vagaries of the paper price but has proved among the best in the industry at coping with its peaks and troughs.

Bunzl's shares have risen by almost 30 per cent over the last few months, helped by a resurgence in the value of second liners as fund managers search for value outside the FTSE 100. And the strong results saw the stock rise another 13.5p to 287p yesterday.

Pammy Gordon has upgraded current-year profit forecasts by £7m to £133m, and by £5m to £145m in 1999, putting the shares on a prospective p/e ratio of 15, falling to 14. Bunzl is still sitting on an undeserved 20 per cent discount to the market, even after its recent re-rating. Good value.

Brussels gives go-ahead to Coopers-PW merger

THE PROPOSED \$13bn (£7.9bn) merger between accountancy firms Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse moved a stage closer yesterday, when the European Commission confirmed it would not issue a statement of objections. The move, which follows last week's approval of the deal by the US Justice Department, is expected to be followed by formal clearance in about six weeks. It is thought that progress was eased after KPMG and Ernst & Young's rival plan was abandoned earlier this year. But both Coopers and PW denied reports that they had made concessions in order to secure approval. "The deal on the table now is exactly the same as we proposed in September," said a spokesman.

Scardino growth pledge

MARJORIE Scardino, chief executive of Pearson, renewed her pledge to deliver double-digit earnings growth yesterday as the media group reported record annual profits. Pearson, owner of the *Financial Times* newspaper, Madame Tussauds waxworks and TV soap *Baywatch*, made pre-tax pre-exceptional profits of £285.9m in 1997, up from £251.8m a year earlier. Ms Scardino said she planned to focus on Pearson's main businesses - business information, educational publishing and TV and entertainment - while selling non-core assets such as stakes in BSKYB and Flextech.

Pensions sell equities

UK PENSION funds made their biggest ever quarterly divestment from domestic equities in the final quarter of last year, selling £7bn worth, according to official figures. This was the ninth consecutive quarter of net sales. Although share buybacks were part of the explanation for the scale of the move at the end of last year, maturing pension funds are switching more heavily into gilts and overseas government bonds. They were also net sellers of overseas equities.

Smiths Industries sale

SMITHS Industries is selling its Graseby product-monitoring and environmental divisions to Thermo Electron Corp for a total of £44m. The consideration includes repayment of inter-company debt. The divisions were formerly part of Graseby plc, acquired by Smiths Industries towards the end of 1997. The proceeds from the sale will be used to reduce debt.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Anglo Pacific (F)	4.02m (0.22m)	2.34m (0.46m)	2.4p (0.04p)	nil
ASW Holdings (F)	464.8m (881.8m)	-5.2m (-51.7m)	-6.9p (-61.5p)	nil
Avon (F)	22.4m (21.5m)	2.28m (1.73m)	10.0p (7.1p)	3.25p (2.75p)
B&Q (F)	1.75m (1.71m)	125.9m (113.5m)	17.9p (16.4p)	6.9p (6.3p)
B&S (F)	28.71m (15.57m)	2.22m (1.92m)	12.9p (10.8p)	3.6p (3.0p)
British Cable News (F)	845.2m (846.2m)	88.6m (-4.6m)	2.2p (-1.8p)	13.5p (12.5p)
Canal (F)	320.7m (246.8m)	52.2m (43.9m)	25.7p (22.0p)	10.0p
File Index (F)	30.3m (34.3m)	1.90m (1.22m)	8.85p (6.02p)	3.7p (3.3p)
Times (F)	177.4m (178.4m)	1.40m (4.16m)	-0.78p (-8.7p)	0.7p
Global Group (F)	130.0m (148.2m)	-1.85m (-4.16m)	-0.78p (-8.7p)	0.7p
News (F)	78.9m (65.5m)	1.40m (4.16m)	10.56p (8.49p)	3.5p
Group (F)	13.38m (8.80m)	1.70m (1.71m)	7.2p (6.1p)	1.15p (1.0p)
Hammer (F)	-	61.7m (30.0m)	15.8p (18.9p)	6.1p (7.8p)
Medi (F)	110.4m (62.8m)	4.91m (4.14m)	16.3p (12.8p)	5.75p (5.2p)
Luxemburg (F)	25.2m (15.2m)	4.71m (2.71m)	1.50p (1.50p)	3.9p
Marshall (F)	178.7m (215.0m)	11.00m (11.53m)	1.50p (1.50p)	4.0p
Metrolux Group (F)	101.2m (96.8m)	13.22m (11.53m)	7.28p (6.25p)	4.15p
Perry Group (F)	518.0m (458.0m)	10.05m (8.28m)	25.6p (21.1p)	8.5p (8.0p)
Splint-Sources (F)	285.0m (272.0m)	47.72m (47.11m)	38.3p (38.0p)	15.5p (14.5p)
Sun Life (F)	-	289.8m (124.0m)	27.6p (18.4p)	6.7p
Thames (F)	1.55m (0.995m)	-21.8m (-10.95m)	-85.0p (-83.0p)	nil
Washington (F)	60.19m (57.78m)	2.52m (5.78m)	6.15p (17.0p)	8.30p (8.10p)

(F) - Full (P) - Partial

Some parts of Europe will be stuck with the wrong interest rates



**HAMISH
McRAE**
ON THE LAST
CHANCE FOR
FINE-TUNING
CURRENCIES

TIDYING UP or a taste of the problems and pressures to come?

You could say that the exchange rate mechanism (ERM) currency realignment at the weekend was simply a bit of fine-tuning ahead of the supposedly irrevocable decision on the currencies of the candidates for Economic and Monetary Union in May. Taken in isolation the realignment was a straightforward bit of common sense. The Greek drachma would have needed to be devalued if it were to become a credible member of the ERM club, given its weak record as a currency over the last couple of decades. So once the decision to join the ERM had been taken, the only way of establishing a central rate which would stick was to give it a bit of margin over the current market view and the 15 per cent devaluation seemed plausible enough.

In the case of the Irish pound, all that was done was to validate the market's view - the new central rate in the ERM, a revaluation of 3 per cent, is much closer to the rate the markets had independently deemed appropriate. It fits in, too, with the need to find some way of checking the booming Irish economy.

Of course in the short term it doesn't actually change anything to change a central rate

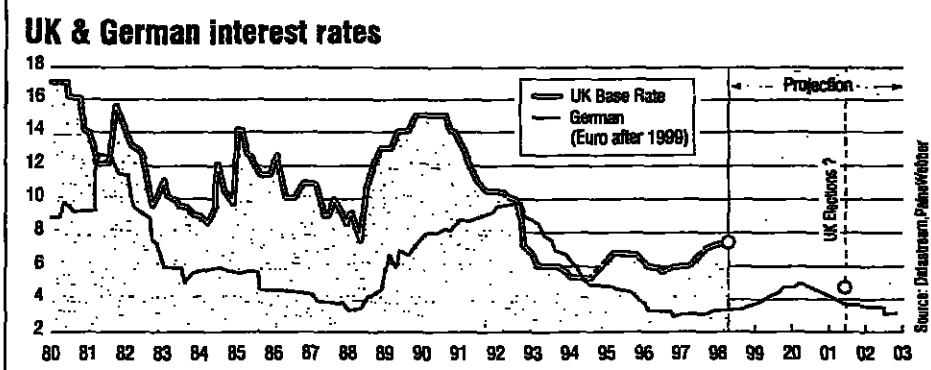
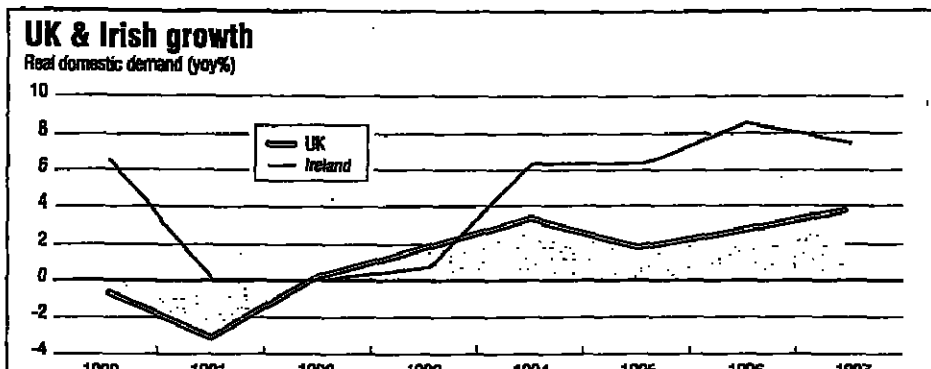
within the ERM if the currency is already within the boundaries of the system. But if the market rate were well adrift of the central rate come May, when the euro conversion rates are to be determined, the conversion rate would have had to have been completely different from the central rate, or there would have had to be a devaluation of the Irish pound. Given the boom, that would have been completely inappropriate.

Just how inappropriate you can see from the top graph, which shows how domestic demand in Ireland has been rising at above 6 per cent since 1994 - higher even than Britain, which in turn has been growing faster than France or Germany every year since then. True, there was plenty of slack in the economy then (and there is still slack in the labour market now), but if there had been a devaluation there would have had to have been either an offsetting tightening of fiscal policy or higher interest rates.

The first would have faced obvious political objections, and the latter would have been impossible in the one-size-fits-all European interest rates that are the integral part of the single currency. In practice members of the euro-club will not be able to have different interest rates after May - in fact they cannot really have them now.

Apply the four-to-one rule of thumb that is sometimes applied to the UK (four percentage points on the effective exchange rate are equivalent to one point on interest rates) to Ireland. The rise in the Irish exchange rate that the markets have imposed and which has now been validated has therefore been equivalent to a 0.75 rise in interest rates - not enough, but a move in the right direction.

But this is the second last time that it is going to be possible to make this sort of adjustment. The final opportunity will come in May - and I would, incidentally, expect another revaluation of the Irish pound then. But once conversion rates are fixed, that is it. Obviously, yet astonishingly the policy-makers have only just



started to think about the consequences of this, for it has become completely clear that parts of Europe are going to have a prolonged period during which they will have the "wrong" interest rates. Slightly over-simplifying, the fringe will have rates that are too loose and the core will have rates that are too tight.

Think about it. We know that countries are going to have the wrong interest rates. In what ways will this matter?

I suppose the starting point would be to say that we have had situations where countries have had the wrong rates in the past, either because governments (which used to fix short-term interest rates in those not-at-all-distant days when they told central banks what to do) made mistakes.

It is also true that you can have wrong rates for different parts of the country and even for different parts of the economy. At the moment we have interest rates that are more-or-less appropriate for the South of England but are too high for the North. We probably have too low rates for parts of the services sector, which is booming, and too high for manufacturing, where output is currently falling.

So even if you do run your own monetary policy you have no guarantee you will get it right. The problem, I suppose is that if someone else runs it (ie the European Central Bank in Frankfurt) you are guaranteed to have the wrong policy at various times. Members of the euro club will find that sometimes monetary policy will be too tight; sometimes too loose. And there will be nothing they can do about it.

The result will be that other policies will have to carry much more of the burden. To some extent economies are self-adjusting: people move to better job opportunities; those who are left

gradually accept lower wages; costs in booming areas rise and start to choke off the excess demand. Expect over the next four or five years the fringes of Europe to boom and the core to decline, an interesting reversal of the trends for most of the European Union's history.

But there are limits to self-adjustment, particularly within Europe where cross-border migration is still quite limited. Much of the burden will in practice fall on fiscal policy - or so it is fashionable among economists to claim.

I have a problem here. I'm not sure that fiscal policy works very well any more. Governments cut taxes but instead of spending the money voters save it, as in Japan. Governments raise taxes, as they have done here, but we bound on regardless. We ran an enormous fiscal deficit in the early 1990s but the recovery did not come till they cut interest rates and let the currency go. The one-size-fits-all monetary policy puts an additional burden on fiscal policy just at the time when it appears to have become much less effective.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



THE FALL-OUT from the "merger" between SBC and UBS continued yesterday with nearly a score of UBS people getting jobs at two rival investment banks.

Pannure Gordon snapped up a dozen UBS staff, mostly equity traders, led by Richard Hine and Colin Griewood. Pannure's head of trading Steven Dalby also recruited two senior institutional salesmen, Gordon Richards and Michael Hoffmann.

On the same day NatWest Securities, the European equities arm of NatWest Markets, hired seven analysts from UBS, including Richard Hamman and Matthew O'Keefe, who have been ranked number one and number two transport analysts respectively for the past five years. NatWest also hired two analysts and two corporate brokers from other banks.

But the journey for the ex-UBS people won't end there. These individuals recruited by NatWest "will be part of the European cash equities businesses being sold to Bankers Trust", according to the bank. The sale should be completed during the second quarter of this year.

The other UBS refugees are Andrew Beale, who analyses telecoms companies, Ian Turner, who covers the UK electricity sector, Richard Franklin on specialist sales for utilities, and Barry Haddon on media.

NatWest has also hired Christian Stark from UBS in Switzerland to research medium-sized Swiss companies. Lesley Watkins and Nicola Stevens join NatWest in the UK from UBS's corporate broking side. And finally Tim Owen joins from HSBC James Capel as a food manufacturing analyst, and Marc Duschene recently joined from BZW to work on UK food retail research.

PROPERTY agents Harman Healy are putting an interesting site up for sale in their next auction on 1 April. The 181-acre site in Greenwich, London, contains "a temporary structure currently under construction for use as an exhibition hall."

The firm, quoted in *Estates Gazette* magazine, says possible future uses for the hall include "storage of white elephants, a red

herring picking plant, a "poppradovak" factory or a retirement home for ex-Cabinet ministers." Harman Healy says the property is let to a Mr P Mandelson on a short lease ending in December 2001.

Jonathan Radgick, Harman Healy's auctioneer, says the last time the firm held an auction on 1 April was roughly 10 years ago, when Ronald Reagan was President. "We put the White House in our catalogue, with R Reagan on a regulated tenancy." They got a few requests for more information back then, and Mr Radgick wouldn't be surprised if they got some enquiries about the dome this April.

To mark their last April Fool's Day spoof they baked a huge cake in the shape of the White House and auctioned it off for charity. "Unfortunately the dome isn't very conducive to cakes," said Mr Radgick. "It's the pylons. So this time we've written to the Millennium Dome Experience Company asking for a couple of free guided tours around the dome."

The catalogue entry for the dome site concludes with a caution, a particularly suitable one in the week of the Budget speech: "Purchasers are warned that the register of contaminated land contains records of high levels of natural gases in connection with the site, much of which emanates from the Westminster area."

YESTERDAY'S press conference for Pearson's results kicked off with a corporate video featuring Richard Lambert, editor of the *Financial Times*, appearing as a talking head on several American TV shows. Mr Lambert is of course spearheading the FT's expansion in the US from their offices in New York.

After the video finished, Marjorie Scardino, chief executive of Pearson, wryly remarked that it showed that Pearson had spent £100m "making Richard Lambert a TV star". When a journalist asked whether FT Television would launch another channel in order to capitalise on Mr Lambert's obvious broadcasting talents, Ms Scardino declared: "What a horrible thought."

She then followed up: "No. We can make much more money hiring him out to all the other channels."

SAM JAFFA, senior spokesperson for Price Waterhouse, has had a spot of bother with his book, *Safe as Houses*, a short history of financial scandals published a year ago.

The affable Mr Jaffa admits: "The publishers, Robson Books, told me that the phrase 'safe as houses' doesn't mean anything to Americans. So the paperback version of the book is going to be called *Great Financial Scandals*."

That's more like it. Although you would have thought Mr Jaffa, who spent two years in the US as a BBC correspondent, would have been more au fait with American use of English. "Obviously I didn't spend long enough," admits the ever-modest author.

J SAINSBURY has appointed Sir George Bull, the chairman of Diageo and former group chief executive of Grand Metropolitan, as deputy chairman with effect from April 20.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	D-Mark
UK	10000	0.5988	0.6026
Australia	2.4972	1.4338	1.4620
Canada	2.1373	1.2191	1.2235
France	6.5488	3.7631	3.8154
Germany	2.3683	1.4021	1.4103
Greece	1.5181	0.8942	0.9143
Italy	1.9349	1.1549	1.1747
Japan	153.19	90.409	92.054
Netherlands	2.2033	1.3286	1.3408
Spain	1.6602	0.9808	1.0009
Sweden	3.0282	1.8004	1.8175
Switzerland	1.4892	0.8812	0.8940
US	1.6673	1.0000	1.0000

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	16573	10000
Belgium	36.722	234.80
China	8.2769	50.00
Czech Rep	20.361	100.00
Denmark	6.4656	40.339
France	6.5488	40.339
Germany	3.3603	20.361
Greece	330.25	200.48
Hungary	200.48	100.00
Indonesia	1657.3	10000
Italy	1.9349	100.00
Japan	153.19	100.00
Korea	1067.6	10000
Malaysia	3.7631	100.00
Norway	4.7564	30.00
Portugal	200.48	100.00
Spain	166.02	100.00
Sweden	3.0282	100.00
Switzerland	1.4892	100.00
US	1.6673	100.00

Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Rate	Rate
UK	7.25%	Discount	2.50%
France	5.50%	Discount	4.50%
Germany	5.50%	Discount	4.50%
Italy	5.50%	Discount	4.50%
Japan	5.50%	Discount	4.50%
Netherlands	5.50%	Discount	4.50%
Spain	5.50%	Discount	4.50%
Sweden	5.50%	Discount	4.50%
Switzerland	5.50%	Discount	4.50%
US	5.50%	Discount	4.50%

Bond Yields

Country	3mth	1yr	2yr	3yr	5yr	10yr
Australia	4.88	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01
Canada	4.88	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01
France	4.88	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01
Germany	4.88	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01
Italy	4.88	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01
Japan	4.88	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01
Netherlands	4.88	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01
Spain	4.88	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01
Sweden	4.88	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01
Switzerland	4.88	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01
US	4.88	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01	5.01

Money Market Rates

Country	Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
UK	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%
France	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Germany	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Italy	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Japan	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Netherlands	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Spain	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Sweden	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
Switzerland	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%
US	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%	5.50%

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
UK Gilts	Jun-98	102.35	102.35	432600	2008400
5yr Gilt	Jun-98	102.35	102.35	432600	2008400
10yr Gilt	Jun-98	102.35	102.35	432600	2008400
30yr Gilt	Jun-98	102.35	102.35	432600	2008400
3m Euro	Jun-98	92.51	92.51	92510	92510
6m Euro	Jun-98	92.51	92.51	92510	92510
9m Euro	Jun-98	92.51	92.51	92510	92510
12m Euro	Jun-98	92.51	92.51	92510	92510
3m US	Jun-98	92.51	92.51	92510	92510
6m US	Jun-98	92.51	92.51	92510	92510
9m US	Jun-98	92.51	92.51	92510	92510
12m US	Jun-98	92.51	92.51	92510	92510

Life FTSE 100 Index Option

Settlement Price	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Settlement Price	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Settlement Price	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Settlement Price	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Settlement Price	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Settlement Price	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Settlement Price	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Settlement Price	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Settlement Price	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Settlement Price	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Settlement Price	Settlement	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest

Commodity Indices

Commodity	Index	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Oil	100	100	100	100	100
Gold	100	100	100	100	100
Silver	100	100	100	100	100
Copper	100	100	100	100	100
Aluminum	100	100	100	100	100
Zinc	100	100	100	100	100
Lead	100	100	100	100	100
Nickel	100	100	100	100	100
Platinum	100	100	100	100	100
Palladium	100	100	100	100	100

Industrial Metals

Commodity	Index	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Aluminum	100	100	100	100	100
Copper	100	100	100	100	100
Gold	100	100	100	100	100
Lead	100	100	100	100	100
Nickel	100	100	100	100	100
Platinum	100	100	100	100	100
Palladium	100	100	100	100	100
Silver	100	100	100	100	100
Zinc	100	100	100	100	100

Precious Metals

Commodity	Index	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Gold	100	100	100	100	100
Silver	100	100	100	100	100
Platinum	100	100	100	100	100
Palladium	100	100	100	100	100

Agricultural

Commodity	Index	High	Low	Est. Volume	Open Interest
Wheat	100	100	100	100	100
Corn	100	100	100	100	100
Soybeans	100	100	100	100	100
Cotton	100	100	100	100	100
Sugar	100	100	100	100	100
Orange Juice	100	100	100	100	100
Live Cattle	100	100	100	100	100
Lean Hogs	100	100	100	100	100
Feeder Cattle	100	100	100	100	100

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit Trust	Price	Unit Trust	Price
ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00	ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00
ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00	ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00
ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00	ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00
ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00	ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00
ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00	ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00
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ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00	ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00
ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00	ABN Growth Trust Ltd	1.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

	Unit	Buy	Ytd	Unit		Buy	Ytd
Energy/Downstream	444401	4755.00	0000				
Energy	10350	4537	4202	UK Index	10900	10800	21
European Acc	234240	2910	420	UK Healthcare	26400	26400	10
Invest	1000	2910	420	UK Smaller Cos	20300	20300	05
Invest	1000	2910	420	UK S&P400 Index	22000	22000	06
Invest/US Growth	10400	1640	120	UK Technical	12100	12100	56
Invest/US Growth	10400	1640	120				
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Drugs trial casts shadow on world

In Berlin, former East Germans whose doping skills created a medal machine go on trial this week. Imre Karacs, in Bonn, says the repercussions will be felt far beyond the Federal Republic

THE spotlight is about to fall on the dark secrets of East Germany's phenomenal sporting achievements. Nearly a decade after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the first indictments are ready, and the vanguard of those who relied on drugs to enhance sporting achievement will go on trial in the fortress-like courthouse of Berlin's Moabit district.

Four swimming coaches and two doctors stand accused of inflicting grievous bodily harm on athletes, but this is only the beginning. A team of 60 special prosecutors has spent the past few years sifting through captured files of the Stasi secret police. Their list of suspects currently runs to 680 names.

They are the coaches, doctors, physios and club officials who had turned East Germany into the most prolific medal-winning machine in history. That those unbeatable heptathletes did not get their biopsies just from the weight training was already obvious, but the investigation has revealed far more widespread and systematic doping than was ever suspected. At the latest count, some 2,000 athletes had at one time been on performance-enhancing drugs.

When the trials are over, record books may have to be erased. The prosecutors will try to protect the identities of the victims - the athletes who simply could not lose against their feeble Western opponents. But many will be found out, and their cheating - often unwitting - will reverberate around the world.

However shocking it may seem, the Communist regime had sent an army of doped-up beefcakes into battle

against the decadent West, the real scandal is yet to emerge. For the cadre who stand accused of relying on drugs to make the GDR great were immediately hired by the former enemy, and have been minting gold for their new masters ever since. Most of the 680 remain in employment, in Germany and many other countries of the world.

The first batch, who go on trial tomorrow, had all worked for the swimming section of Dynamo Berlin, the Stasi's very own club. The most prominent of them, Dieter Lindemann, was coaching Franziska van Almsick until very recently. Rolf Glier, another accused, was working as swimming coach in Austria when he was charged. Volker Rischke also remained in the coaching business in Germany. Only one of the four trainers accused of encouraging the use of drugs, Dieter Krause, has failed to find a job in sport.

The charge sheet names 17 athletes whose health was destroyed by the anabolic steroids they had been forced to take. One teenage girl grew a beard as a result of the "vitamin pills". Another developed a deep voice. The "side-effects" catalogued in the Stasi files include hormonal imbalance, loss of

libido, damage to the liver and reproductive organs, mood changes and depression. The investigators have a list of 350 athletes who still suffer from the effects of the enforced medication, and four fatalities.

The Moabit court, which had been grappling with murderous border guards by the Wall and the politicians behind the trigger, has its work cut out. After this case, swimming

sections of 10 other clubs will be processed. Women's swimming was the most methodically drugged East German sport and the most successful.

Most of the athletes involved are dreading their moment of fleeting fame, but some can hardly wait. Rika Reinisch, three-times Olympic swimming gold medalist, is one of the few to publicly denounce their tormentors.

"I was 14 when my coach, Uwe Neumann, first handed over the blue pills," she recalled in a magazine interview last year. "He said: 'Come, little girl, swallow these vitamins. You'll recover better.' Today, the same Mr Neumann works at the Olympic training centre in Leipzig. Hans-Joachim Wondol, another who is accused of propagating performance-enhancing drugs, also works as a doctor at the Olympic centre in Berlin."

May be not for much longer. These gentlemen are now helping Berlin prosecutors with their inquiries. Cases are also being put together against other perpetrators in different sports. When the court is finished with swimming, it will turn to athletics, followed by rowing, canoeing, weightlifting and cycling.

Did not the East Germans do well in these sports? And are not the unified Germans still performing amazingly well in the same disciplines? Perhaps it is a mere coincidence, but the leading German athletes today tend to have East German coaches, many of whom are on the list of 680. Among the suspects are a former doctor of last year's Tour de France winner, Jan Ullrich. The Olympic champion, Dagmar Hase, is also in dan-



Clean sweep: The former coach of Franziska van Almsick is among those facing doping charges Photograph: Reuters

ger of losing her coach, Bernd Henneberg, who used to train another former swimming star, Kristin Otto.

In women's swimming, it appears it was impossible to stay away from all the drugs. At the World Championships in Perth early this year, the Australian hosts objected to the chief of the German team, Winfried Leopold. Unlike most of his colleagues, Leopold had confessed to have known about

doping, and served a four-year suspension after the fall of the Wall. The German authorities backed him in the dispute with the Australians and won, though mainly because the focus suddenly - and memorably - shifted to the contents of a Chinese suitcase.

The incident, nevertheless, gave a foretaste of further embarrassment when other trainers manufacturing medals for Germany are eventually un-

masked. For whatever might have been the failings of East Germany, their coaches are reputed to be the best in the world. No German club can afford to shun their services, and many of them are going to extraordinary lengths to protect their new employees.

The Berlin investigators complain of lack of co-operation, not only from the clubs but also from national federations. Questionnaires are not

being returned, inquiries are blocked in high places. Sport, it appears, simply does not want to know what went on in the East, because too many skeletons are rattling in cupboards in the West.

Life would be so much simpler if everyone would forget about the past. The world of sport in Germany is rooting for an uneventful trial in Berlin, but it is likely to be disappointed.

Rise for Rusedski despite defeat

Tennis

DESPITE losing to Chile's Marcelo Rios in the final of the ATP Champions' Cup in Indian Wells, Greg Rusedski, the British No 1, is pleased with his start to the new season.

"It has been a positive start to the season so far. I was just one match from getting into the top three in the world and it puts me into striking distance of the top players."

"I'm only a few points behind them so it's a positive thing. If I have a good week I can actually move into the top three."

Although he lost 6-3, 6-7, 7-6, 6-4 on Sunday, Rusedski managed to climb a place, to five, in the rankings, but his British compatriot Tim Henman dropped from 19 to 20.

Henman, who lost in the first round, slipped a place because Austrian Thomas Muster reached the semi-finals of the same tournament. Muster rose from 21 to 17.

Meanwhile Rusedski and Henman will lead the British challenge in the Davis Cup tie against Ukraine in the Euro/African Zone Group One at Newcastle from 3 to 5 April.

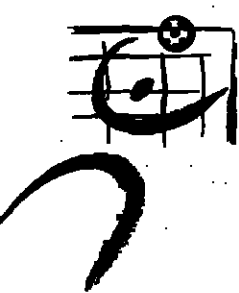
David Lloyd, the British captain, has nominated five players - Rusedski, Henman, Andrew Richardson, Neil Broad and Arvind Parmar - from whom the final team of four will be chosen.

Parmar, the 19-year-old Hertfordshire prospect, is likely to stand down but he will have useful experience with the squad.

Lloyd also has to decide whether to play Rusedski and Henman in the doubles as well as the singles. Broad is a doubles specialist but may not be chosen if the tie is close.

Britain met Ukraine in Kiev last July and only won 3-2 after Rusedski and Henman had both lost to Andrei Medvedev.

PHILIPS



Today we publish the updated results of The Independent Fantasy Football League. The league table includes all scores up to February 8th. The player list includes scores from all games played until March 15th. Neither set of scores includes results from the FA Cup. The overall winner at the end of the season will win a pair of tickets to the World Cup finals in France this summer.

Every time one of your players score you get four points. There are four points for a keeper or a defender every time their team keeps a clean sheet. If a player scores the winning goal, i.e. if there is a one goal difference in the scoreline, the player scoring the final goal for the winning team is awarded 1 bonus point awarded in addition to standard goal related points. Each successful Assist, a pass judged by our experts to lead directly to a goal, will give a player 3 points. The opinion of our experts on the matter is final. Each player selected and starting a game will be awarded one point.

If a player is given a Yellow Card they lose 1 point, if a player is given a Red Card they lose 3 points. Own goals, either scored or conceded, do not count.

The Premiership Manager that you choose will be awarded 3 points if their real-life team wins, 1 point is awarded if they draw and no points are given if they lose.

Updated player scores and league tables will be published every Tuesday in The Independent and repeated the following Sunday in The Independent on Sunday.

Player	Score
Player 1	1
Player 2	2
Player 3	3
Player 4	4
Player 5	5
Player 6	6
Player 7	7
Player 8	8
Player 9	9
Player 10	10

Independent Fantasy Football

OVERALL SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 8 AUGUST - 15 MARCH

POS	NAME	TEAM	POINTS
1	Mr D Edmington	Edmo United	924
2	Mr H Hayes	Early Birds	924
3	Mr A Choudh	Niklas Sch II	922
4	Mr C King	Fighting Victory	920
5	Mr P Tufner	No Up 4	920
6	Mr D Evans	Bosham End Old Boys	919
7	Mr D Cox	Southville FC	919
8	Mr D Baker	Dale Vu	915
9	Mr B Earl	Simply The Best	915
10	Mr D Earl	The Unconquerables	915
11	Mr D Aston	Billy Boy's 2nd II	913
12	Mr Archer	No Wright	909
13	Mr I Boyle	Wernbley Bounders	909
14	Mr A Wingrove	Tony's Boys	909
15	Mr T Lyons	Diana's Demons	906
16	Mr S Scott	Unbeatable	904
17	Mr I Brown	The Hoofers	899
18	Mr L Wild	Amersham FC	895
19	Mr M Evans	I've Started But Wm I Finish	895
20	Mr K Mitchell	Miles A Team	893
21	Mr M Evans	Miles C Team	893
22	Mr A Cunningham	The Zebras	892
23	Mr G Bell	The Healy Monsters	892
24	Mr A Pett	Billy Boy's 3rd II	890
25	Mr S Aston	Nursery Park Rangers	889
26	Mr P Mitchell	POC2	888
27	Mr S Scott	The Dream Team	888
28	Mr Brady	Look Lively	888
29	Mr D Adcock	Jack's Lads	888
30	Mr J McCrossin	Washed Up Army	887
31	Mr H Pawley	Robert's Raiders	883
32	Mr D Thomas	Scamptrope Extras	883
33	No Name	Leo Dis	881
34	Mr M Evans	Miles B Team	881
35	Mr T Brader	Wow For Short	879
36	Mr J Cox	Rams Rovers	878
37	Mr A Gromley	Catic Warriors 2	876
38	Mr K Boyle	Clapton Rovers	876
39	Mr D Aston	Billy's Boys	876
40	Mr T Ruff	Sunny Scorchers	875

CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	PTS	GOALS	ASSISTS	POINTS
400	Diana	ARS	0	28	25	80
401	Upson	ARS	0	11	20	50
402	Pett	ARS	0	10	42	50
403	Grimmond	ARS	0	41	27	50
404	Wheatman	ARS	0	41	23	50
405	Round	ARS	0	41	23	50
406	Adams	ARS	0	38	45	50
407	Kovacs	ARS	0	37	45	50
408	Sammons	ARS	0	35	52	50
409	Scottham	ARS	0	34	52	50
410	Nelson	ARS	0	34	52	50
411	Wright	ARS	0	33	52	50
412	Wright	ARS	0	33	52	50
413	Grapson	ARS	0	33	52	50
414	Moore	ARS	0	33	52	50
415	Moore	ARS	0	33	52	50
416	Thompson	ARS	0	33	52	50
417	Kramer	ARS	0	33	52	50
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Reformed Parlour wins England reward

By Glenn Moore
Football Correspondent

FACED with the need to break the monotony of a pre-match training camp, many a manager has resorted to taking his players to the cinema. Scotland's Craig Brown memorably did so with "Braveheart".

Should Glenn Hoddle decide to follow suit during England's sojourn at Bisham Abbey next weekend there can be only one choice. "Good Will Hunting". The story of a wayward talent who reforms and flourishes just as it appears he is to waste his life's potential should strike as much a chord with England as Mel Gibson did with the Scots.

Yesterday Hoddle, who relishes the Robin Williams role of

guiding mentor, rewarded the latest penitent when he called up Ray Parlour for the 25 March friendly with Switzerland. The Arsenal midfielder is joined by former drinking partner and team-mate Paul Merson who, having played well for the B team last month, is expected to start the Bernie friendly.

Tony Adams is also aboard, but one bad boy turned good (most of the time, anyway) is missing, Paul Gascoigne. This, Hoddle stressed, is because he is injured, not as a result of fresh allegations of assault which the player strenuously denies. Gascoigne, who has completed 90 minutes only once in 1998, spoke to Hoddle yesterday morning and told him that he was still doing only light jogging.

"He was desperate to start playing again, but I told him the important thing was not to come back too early, as he has done in the past, and get another problem," Hoddle said. "I think he was pleased to hear that."

Gascoigne has been the subject of recent transfer speculation but Hoddle said he did not mind who he played for as long as he was playing regularly.

Parlour, whose bright performance in the recent B international against Chile was typical of his impressive season, looked an exciting talent when he first broke into the Arsenal team six seasons ago, but the restrictions placed on his game by George Graham and an over-enthusiastic social life hampered his development. Having

featured, with Adams, in the tabloids for a notorious "booze-and-birds" escapade, his lowest point came when he was arrested in Hong Kong for drunkenly assaulting a taxi driver on an end-of-season tour.

However, spurred by the examples of Merson and Adams, and by fatherhood, he has cleaned up his behaviour. This, together with the advent of Arsène Wenger at Highbury, has enabled him to become a key member of the Double-chasing side, with his penetrative running on the right flank balancing Marc Overmars on the Arsenal left.

"A lot of his habits have changed in the last 18 months," Hoddle said. "With his improved fitness he has put on a

yard of pace. He has become a good example to people. There are so many other players, if they got their mind and body right, who knows what they could achieve?"

One who has is Merson - "an amazing story which gives you heart," Hoddle said. "He has put it right, he is a changed person and player and he is getting the rewards. Sometimes you have to reach the bottom before you can rise."

Hoddle pointedly said that Merson's inclusion "showed how important the B match was". As expected, Chris Sutton, who refused to play in that game, has been omitted from both senior and Under-21 squads. Five over-age players can play in the latter match and

they will include Jamie Redknapp as a sweeper.

There is one other uncapped player in the senior party, Kevin Pressman, the Sheffield Wednesday goalkeeper. While he is a useful keeper, his inclusion is indicative of the dearth of English No 1s in the Premiership. The only other options for Hoddle were David Watson of Barnsley, Crystal Palace's Kevin Miller, or 40-year-old Steve Ogilvie of Coventry.

The 26-man squad is expected to be significantly reduced by withdrawals, notably from Manchester United, who have seven representatives, following this week's European and FA Cup games.

Switzerland have picked 26 English-based players. Black-

burn's Stéphane Henchoz and Ramon Vega of Tottenham. The first squad picked by new manager Gilbert Gress also includes Stéphane Chapuisat, Ciriaco Sforza and Kubilay Türkyilmaz.

ENGLAND SQUAD (Friendly v Switzerland, Bern, 25 March): Martin (Leeds Utd), Flowers (Blackburn Rovers), Pressman (Sheffield Wed), Southgate (Aston Villa), G. Neville (Man Utd), P. Neville (Man Utd), Campbell (Tottenham Hotspur), Adams (Arsenal), Merson (Arsenal), Hinchcliffe (Sheffield Wed), LA. Sene (Chelsea), P. Farquhar (Wid. Ham), Ince (Liverpool), Parleur (Arsenal), Scholes (Man Utd), Beckham (Man Utd), Batty (Newcastle Utd), Cole (Man Utd), Shearer (Newcastle Utd), Duffin (Coventry City), Owen (Liverpool), Merson (Middlesbrough).

SWITZERLAND SQUAD (Competition): Neuchâtel, Zuberbühler (Grasshoppers), P. Müller (Servette), H. H. (Schaffhausen), J. J. (Neuchâtel), Vogel (Grasshoppers), V. (Tottenham Hotspur), Wolf (St. Gallen), S. (Vickersburg), L. (St. Gallen), M. (Servette), W. (Wid. Ham), Y. (St. Gallen), D. (Grasshoppers), K. (Wid. Ham), S. (Servette).

Maine line to nowhere for Lee

Manchester City's latest casualty was supposed to be the club's saviour, writes Guy Hodgson

THERE have been many reasons to feel embarrassed to be a Manchester City supporter in recent seasons but the biggest, surely, is that there was once a fans' movement by the name of "Forward With Franny". From the moment Francis Lee became chairman at Maine Road the direction, unerringly, was backwards.

When he announced his resignation yesterday, a little over four years since flight BA254 brought him from Antigua to the City boardroom, Lee said he went with his character intact, which shows how power can delude even as it ebbs to nothing. A man worshipped as a player (112 goals in 249 League appearances) had become the chairman who was openly despised. BA, as in bad to awful.

"While I wish Joe Royle well in a task equivalent to nailing jelly to the ceiling," one supporter wrote recently to *The Pink*, Manchester's Saturday sports paper, "he should be on his guard as long as Franny Lee is in charge. City fans are entitled to suggest the problems go much further than poor team spirit. Was Frank Clark ever in charge?" Or Brian Horton, or Steve Coppell, or Alan Ball... the list of managers under Lee was an embarrassment, seven in all. And yet things just got worse. In Peter Swales' last three full seasons, City finished fifth, fifth and ninth in the top division. In Lee's seasons the story was 18th in the Premiership, relegation and 14th in the First Division. Today they are in the relegation places and the new board could soon be trying to extricate themselves from the Second Division.

Lee arrived as a messiah, but one without the means to work miracles as, from the start, the problem appears to have been money. A wealthy man by most standards, he does not have the resources of a Jack Walker and simply could not find the cash or the backers to turn around a poorly managed club with delusions of matching Manchester United. At yesterday's press conference, the new chairman, David Bernstein, said City had been "undercapitalised and overborrowed" for years.

Looking through Lee's pronouncements, they suggest he had no idea of the depth of the problems when he took over in February 1994. Two weeks later he said: "This will be the happiest club in the land. The players will be the best paid and we'll drink plenty of champagne, celebrate and sing until we're hoarse."

He was right about one thing: fans got hoarse shouting abuse. His reign was marked by departing players rather than stability and you could build a fine team round Tony Cotton, Terry Phelan, Keith Curle, Niall Quinn, Garry Flitcroft and Steve Lomas. The replacements, George Kinkladze apart, have not been as good and the club has more than 55 professionals, an indictment of the buying policy.

The indication was that, for all the fine words, City were far deeper in the red than Lee had imagined and he did not have the resources to do anything about it. He had to sell to ease the wage burden.

There was also, as the above letter exposed, a suspicion that Lee tried to manage the team as well as run the club. It was something he vigorously denied, saying the only matter he had an input on was transfers. "There's a lot of money involved these days and it would surprise me if any big clubs depend solely on the manager's opinion."

The quick departure after 33 days of Steve Coppell, who claimed he quit because of a mental breakdown, was never properly explained, however, and supporters have always believed it was because Lee was interfering.

Now he is gone and although Lee is keeping his 11 per cent shareholding in the club, it is unlikely he will be back for some time.

Whole new eye-ball game for Collymore

By Phil Shaw

JOHN GREGORY will look into the eyes of his players, searching for signs of trepidation or anticipation, before finalising his side to face Atletico Madrid tonight in the match that will make or break Aston Villa's season.

The scrutiny may be especially intense in the case of Stan Collymore, who scored twice against Liverpool in Gregory's first match as manager, but has not played since suffering a groin injury during Villa's 1-0 defeat by Atletico in the first leg of their Uefa Cup quarter-final.

Collymore declared himself fit yesterday, while Julian Joachim shrugged off a knee injury sustained during Saturday's win over Crystal Palace. Both are vying for a place alongside Dwight Yorke, whose inclusion is assured, and possibly Savo Milosevic, who scored twice against Palace without particularly impressing Gregory.

The likelihood is that Villa will turn to Collymore, perhaps keeping Milosevic in reserve, with Joachim a candidate for a role wide on the right of midfield. But Gregory may well

have had the £7m striker in mind when he said he wanted to be sure that certain individuals were prepared for a potentially explosive contest.

"I shall make eye contact with them at training because you can always read things from doing that," he said. "I'm one for studying carefully every little thing they do, to see whether they are ready for it and whether they've got fear or excitement in their eyes."

A fired-up Collymore can be an awesome prospect for defenders, as Liverpool discovered. That success was one of three in Gregory's first four Premiership games as Brian Little's successor, but he knows it will take an exceptional performance to win by two goals.

"I don't expect us to go for the jugular from the first minute. There has to be a certain amount of caution, though I don't envisage us sitting back and trying to nick one."

Atletico are unbeaten in seven European away matches under Raddy Antic, who is an arch exponent of counter-attacking football. Nevertheless, they arrived in Birmingham under a cloud. Their president, Je-

sus Gil, questioned whether it was worth turning up tonight after Saturday's 2-1 defeat by Campostella. "I am disgusted with them. A lot of the players don't care about wearing the Atletico shirt," Gil said. "We need to go out with the attitude of Aston Villa and fight for the world."

The man charged with keeping emotions under control is Mario van der Ende, the Dutchman who refereed so expertly when England met Italy in Rome last October.

Ten home players and seven from Atletico start the evening knowing a yellow card would put them out of the semi-final first leg, although Villa have received unexpected encouragement in one instance.

Mark Bosnich was cautioned for time-wasting when he sought to draw attention to his bombardment by the crowd in Madrid. Despite the absence of a formal appeals procedure, the Villa secretary, Steve Stride, wrote to Uefa, pointing out the "strange circumstances". The ruling body's disciplinary committee have promised to examine the case on 23 March.



Mark Bosnich: 'I feel I've matured a lot and worked very hard at my game'

Photograph: Brendan Monks

'Potty' Bosnich in the form of his life

FROM turmoil at Aston Villa and trauma with Australia to hat-tricks by Kevin Gallacher, Ronaldo and Romario, Mark Bosnich has taken everything that this season can throw at him and emerged with his reputation enhanced.

Everything, that is, bar the proverbial kitchen sink. And after being pelted with batteries, bottles and lighters during the first leg of Villa's Uefa Cup quarter-final at Atletico Madrid, Bosnich should not be surprised to see a unit hurtling out of the Spanish end at Villa Park tonight.

The way the 26-year-old goalkeeper has been performing, he would probably catch it and bowl it to a colleague. For in spite of hugely disappointing results with club and country, Bosnich is not alone in believing that he has never played so well, so consistently.

Ron Atkinson, the manager who took him to Villa after Manchester United brought him over as a 16-year-old, remarked of his defiance against Atletico that Bosnich "might just be the best keeper in the world" (albeit one who, in the finest traditions of the position, was "a bit potty").

Gordon Strachan said after Coventry's FA Cup win at Villa that one of his many fine saves, a mid-air volley after a deflection suddenly changed the trajectory of a shot, was possibly the greatest he had seen.

Oceania's footballer of the year is embarrassed by such praise, although if self-belief were a crime he would be serving life. "Touching wood, and without wishing to appear conceited, I've been very happy with my form," Bosnich says. "I feel I've matured a lot and worked very hard at my game since I got all the publicity for saving penalties a few years ago."

Amid the missiles in Madrid he was composed, brave and agile by turn. He was eventually beaten by Christian Vieri's bludgeoned penalty, which he chastised himself for reaching but not keeping out, and sensed that

Villa's goalkeeper can add to his reputation against Atletico in the Uefa Cup tonight, says Phil Shaw

Raddy Antic's side were content with a 1-0 scoreline. "I think they're confident they can score anywhere in Europe," he says.

The striker who ensured that Atletico went one better was already known to Bosnich. "I trained with Vieri in Sydney when he was 13. His father was a legend in Italy before he came to play in Australia. There was nothing of Christian and a more uncoordinated kid is hard to imagine. Now he's strong, he pulls off defenders' shoulders brilliantly and he's got a good understanding with Kiko. You can see the influence of Juventus' training on him."

Talking of the practice pitch, Bosnich was delighted by the return of the former Villa coach John Gregory as manager, much as he was saddened by the "typically unselfish" resignation of Brian Little. "Dwight [Yorke] and I are close, and we often talked about how we missed him after he left for Wycombe," he says.

"He brought something to training that was never really replaced. Now it's as if he never left. The biggest problem has been learning to call him 'Boss'. We got used to 'Grege'."

"In Madrid, he'd been back less than a week but his positivity shone through. The vibes he brought into the dressing-room at half-time made a real difference. It was like the Alamo in the first half, but he very calmly reminded us how much better we'd looked when we kept the ball."

"He told us it wouldn't be possible for Atletico to keep going at the same pace in the second half, and he was right."

Gregory's newly appointed coach, Steve Harrison, also im-

pressed Bosnich with his tactical insights and his jester's touch. In the tense moments before the game he did his John Barnes impersonation. "He had us all in fits. We're still a young team and we thrive on light relief."

Heaven knows Villa needed some. Tipped as possible champions, they were out of everything except Europe and the relegation dogfight by the time Gregory swept in. Criticism of Little, of chairman Doug Ellis and the players, notably Stan Collymore, has been relentless. Bosnich accepts that it goes with the territory - "we're getting paid very good money," he says candidly - and tries to use it as "a positive force".

In between Villa's travails came travels with Australia. His nerveless display in Tehran before 128,000 Iranians gave Terry Venables' Soccerex a platform from which to progress to France 98. A lack of what he terms "big-game experience" prevented them from building upon it.

"I know I could still go to maybe two World Cups, but it's really going to hit home this summer because I needed to test myself against guys like Schmeichel, Seaman, Bartzke and Peruzzi. I tasted the tournament atmosphere on a smaller scale in the Confederations Cup in Saudi."

In the final, Australia lost 6-0 to Brazil a week after holding the world champions 0-0, yet Bosnich maintains that he had a better match than in Madrid. "I said to my dad: 'How can I tell people I played well when I let in six?' He said that if I'd played badly it would have been 12."

Villa are going to need positive thinking by the netful tonight, but if all else fails Bosnich may be able to call on a favour from fate. On his way to our meeting, he stopped to help a woman whose car had broken down. "I like to think that if you do some good, it comes back to you," he explains, breaking into a laugh. "Maybe if we end up in a penalty shoot-out..."

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19 A Birmingham (W) 1537; 20 T Hemmings (CB) 1538; 21 A Chiles (W) 1534; 22 G Harwood (C) 1539; 23 M Northing (SW) 1482; 24 T Crispin (SW) 1431; 25 F Sarnard (F) 1442.



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Pearl in the dust: Florida Pearl, the hottest favourite at the Festival, relaxes at Cheltenham yesterday before taking to the track tomorrow

Photograph: Peter Jay

Supposin has the Champion style

THE DAY has arrived when all National Hunt aficionados can enjoy a free medical. If you check your pulse this opening Cheltenham Festival morning and feel just a regular beat you know it is time to go to the doctor. A drum roll should be the appropriate sensation.

Cheltenham is noisy, claustrophobic, impoverished and, by close of play, reminiscent of a Manila rubbish dump. These are the small factors which make it so good.

The main ones are the visitors human and equine. It can be a devil of a job determining who has the hardest job at the Festival. The jumping horses run over the most sublime piece of National Hunt territory in the world. The prettiness of the surroundings is, however, matched by the peril, and one of the few sobering thoughts of the week is that some animals are likely to surrender their lives in this the fiercest amphitheatre they will ever see.

It is hard work too for the spectators who come here, especially the many Irish who leave behind them fragments of pottery pig to come to the meeting. A March week in the

Cotswolds, with its incessant pushing, punting and carousing can leave visitors feeling as if they've just been in *Midnight Express*. There is plenty of *craic*, but the main one always tends to zigzag down the middle of your wallet.

There is rivalry with the bookmakers and rivalry between the English and Irish, but never the knuckled rivalry you see in other sporting crowds of 50,000. These are great sports fans, watching great horses in a great setting, a sum which equals a great occasion.

Anorak wisdom has it though that we are not about to see a great horse win the first of the major championship races this afternoon, the Champion Hurdle. On official figures this is a pretty poor bunch, but it seems inconceivable that the animal which leads home today's huge herd of 18 runners will not be recognised as a brave and talented athlete.

Those who walked the course yesterday reported the going to be on the dead side, but with a dry night expected perfect ground is anticipated. Any beast for which the going is for-

Richard Edmondson selects a restored master to win the Festival's first highlight

warded as an excuse will have to be a fussy thing indeed.

A notable element of the race is how many runners are classically Flat bred. The Northern Dancer male line is represented by I'm Supposin, Istabraq, Dato Star, Graphic Equaliser, Pridwell, Sanmartino and Shadow Leader. The last-named has his chance de-

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: I'm Supposin
(Cheltenham 3.15)
NB: His Song
(Cheltenham 2.00)

spite a blank run this season, as he is now guaranteed the sort of fast-run race he benefited from in winning the Supreme Novices' Hurdle a year ago.

Dato Star was so enormously impressive at Haydock last time that he must be a consideration, though whether he is quite as effective on this drying ground is open to question. For the needy and greedy the best outsiders appear to be Theatreworld, who was runner-

up 12 months ago, and Cadougold, who could be dismissed as just a good handicapper were it not for the fact that his manager is filled by Martin Pipe.

Win money, however, should be limited to either Istabraq or I'm Supposin. The former, the favourite, attempts to become the first horse to graduate from the Royal & Sun Alliance Novices' Hurdle (the race he won here 12 months ago) to the ultimate hurdling title.

As his novice success was over two and a half miles the conundrum has always been whether Istabraq possesses the speed to take on the best horses at the minimum trip. The pedigree chart certainly suggests he should as the six-year-old is a three-parts brother to Secret, the 1984 Derby winner.

Istabraq, though, was nowhere near as good as his pedigree on the Flat, when stamina was considered his forte. "He's a horse who does not do anything quickly," Charlie Swan, the Irish champion jockey, re-

ports. "He's not a horse you can be cantering on and say 'go' and he picks up immediately. He takes a while to get going."

"Obviously he's proven over a trip, but he's got the speed to win at two miles as well. He does have a good cruising speed and he stays well, which is what you need at Cheltenham. They all said Danoli didn't have the pace to beat Champion Hurdle horses, but he almost did it [third to Alderbrook in 1995] against one of the best fields there's been recently for a Champion Hurdle."

If Istabraq has managed to hold his form for a long time now (he is unbeaten in nine starts after losing on his debut), the horse that has come into consideration with one hit is I'm Supposin. Richard Rowe's expensive purchase was beginning to look, and run, like a white elephant this season after four straight defeats. Then, however, came a spanking demolition of some decent rivals at Wincanton, where the six-year-old was afforded a decent pace for the first time this campaign.

"It was nice to see him run to the line that day and, more than that, go three furlongs af-

ter it," Rowe says. "Richard [Dunwoody] said he had a problem pulling him up, and it was nice to see him smiling because he doesn't do that very often."

"If people want to crab that form it's up to them and I'm happy for them to back something else if they want to. I would say my horse has definitely come on for the run, because that's the first time he's seen a race out."

I'm Supposin certainly did that in this race 12 months ago when, on only his third start over timber, he finished fourth to Make A Stand. The tall horse has received considerable buffing since then and comes into the contest on a seasonal high.

In what may well be an exceedingly fast championship, the best Flat horse may now have the tools to become the best hurdling horse of them all. I'M SUPPOSIN (nap 3.15) is already a Derby winner, having won the Ulster Harp version at Down Royal. In addition, he was beaten only seven lengths in Winged Love's 1995 Irish Derby, when he finished in front of a horse called Celtic Swing. Many more Celts are about to be frustrated this afternoon.

A crucial day dawns for two Irishmen returning to a spiritual home

WHEN Charlie Swan is legged into Istabraq's saddle before the Cheltenham Hurdle this afternoon there will be no flamboyant or nervous words from connections. He is not going to hear anything like "For God's sake give this one a good hiding because I've got my conkers on it."

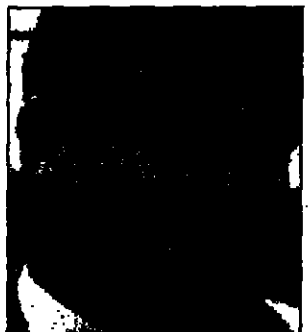
There will indeed be lots of conkers (by any normal rationalisation) riding on Istabraq, but the man who will place the biggest bet is not given to great acts of emotion. "Enjoy yourself," J P McManus will say, "do your best."

They call John Patrick McManus "the Sundance Kid", which is perhaps the most inappropriate sobriquet in racing. The nickname suggests a figure with sequins, a white suit perhaps, and a thrusting manner. J P is actually thunderously unflashy, an earnest character at the races in his long dark coat. You half expect him to start extolling the virtues of Mormonism.

"A lot of people wouldn't recognise him," Edward Gillespie, Cheltenham's managing director, says. "He merges with the crowd and only a few, such as the serious group he has got involved in racing, would know who and where he is."

"He is pleasant but he is not Dave Allen and he certainly does not go out of his way to court the limelight. He is essentially a private man who just gets on and does it."

J P tries to get on at an early price and do the bookmakers. It is something he has affected with uncommon frequency since Mister Donovan became the first horse to carry his emerald green and gold-hooped colours to success at the



Hard cash not flash defines McManus the biggest hitter

Festival in the Sun Alliance Novices' Hurdle of 1982. McManus won a reported £250,000, which, in his permanently understated style, he referred to as "a nice little touch". J P McManus was 47 last Tuesday, but a more significant day for him would have been Sunday, when a memorial mass was held for John Durkan at Newmarket. Durkan was the man who found him Istabraq before leukaemia located and claimed the 31-year-old would-be trainer.

In the Gold Cup, J P McManus fancies Rough Quest each-way and in the Festival Bumper he advances his own Joe Mac, who is named after his great friend and Limerick hurler Joe McKenna. But most of all J P would like to win this afternoon's Champion Hurdle for the championship race kudos, for the punting money and, most of all, for John Durkan.

Richard Edmondson

ASK 100 betting-shop punters to sum up Adrian Maguire in one word and 99 of them will surely say "determination". The other one, the resident smart-alec who blights every shop, will probably offer "injury-prone". Richard Dunwoody is the great stylist and Tony McCoy the winner machine, but when Maguire rides a horse, his indefatigability is almost a visible saddle-companion, and the punters love him for it.

Quite simply, the last three Festivals have not been the same without the small bundle of grit which belongs aboard David Nicholson's runner. Just days before the meeting in 1995, he returned to Ireland to mourn the death of his mother, while in each of the last two seasons, injury has forced him to watch from the stands. Backers whose usual approach to a big field is to stick a fiver on whatever Maguire is riding have been forced to look elsewhere.

Now, at last, Maguire can pick up the threads of what had promised to be one of the great Festival careers. He was just 19 and still an amateur when a chance opening on Martin Pipe's Omerta in the Kim Muir Chase became his first ride and first winner at the Festival. A year later, he won the Gold Cup itself on Cool Ground, while 1994 brought success in the Queen Mother Champion Chase (Viking Flagship) and Triumph Hurdle (Mysliv).

Viking Flagship again figures in Maguire's book of rides, but it is Relkeel, his mount in today's Champion Hurdle, who would provide the most appropriate winning return. Twice scratched from the race at the last moment when near favouritism, Relkeel carries the colours of the late



Maguire still determined to add great to a gritty image

Brigadier Roscoe Harvey, who had been one of jump racing's most committed supporters.

Such is the strength of Maguire's engagement book that he is second-favourite to be top rider at the meeting. Zafabad, favourite for the Triumph Hurdle, is his most obvious chance, although Zaralaska (Supreme Novices' Hurdle) and Escartefigue (Royal & Sun Alliance Chase) have plenty to recommend them.

In the Gold Cup Maguire will partner Barton Bank, the runner-up to Mr Mulligan 12 months ago. He will start at around 40-1, but as Maguire points out, "he put up a great performance to finish second in the Hennessy and no one said he had a chance last year either."

Victory for such an outsider would normally delight the bookies. The best news for punters, though, is that Maguire is back, and few of his fans will let any mount go unbacked.

Greg Wood

The big-race field

3.15 CHAMPION HURDLE (CLASS A) (Grade 1) C4
£200,000 added 2m 110yds Penalty value £116,000

1-0004 BELLATOR (17) 5yo 12st
Owner: P. Richardson; Trainer: G. Bading
Form: 1st in 1997, 2nd in 1998, 3rd in 1999, 4th in 2000, 5th in 2001, 6th in 2002, 7th in 2003, 8th in 2004, 9th in 2005, 10th in 2006, 11th in 2007, 12th in 2008, 13th in 2009, 14th in 2010, 15th in 2011, 16th in 2012, 17th in 2013, 18th in 2014, 19th in 2015, 20th in 2016, 21st in 2017, 22nd in 2018, 23rd in 2019, 24th in 2020, 25th in 2021, 26th in 2022, 27th in 2023, 28th in 2024, 29th in 2025, 30th in 2026, 31st in 2027, 32nd in 2028, 33rd in 2029, 34th in 2030, 35th in 2031, 36th in 2032, 37th in 2033, 38th in 2034, 39th in 2035, 40th in 2036, 41st in 2037, 42nd in 2038, 43rd in 2039, 44th in 2040, 45th in 2041, 46th in 2042, 47th in 2043, 48th in 2044, 49th in 2045, 50th in 2046, 51st in 2047, 52nd in 2048, 53rd in 2049, 54th in 2050, 55th in 2051, 56th in 2052, 57th in 2053, 58th in 2054, 59th in 2055, 60th in 2056, 61st in 2057, 62nd in 2058, 63rd in 2059, 64th in 2060, 65th in 2061, 66th in 2062, 67th in 2063, 68th in 2064, 69th in 2065, 70th in 2066, 71st in 2067, 72nd in 2068, 73rd in 2069, 74th in 2070, 75th in 2071, 76th in 2072, 77th in 2073, 78th in 2074, 79th in 2075, 80th in 2076, 81st in 2077, 82nd in 2078, 83rd in 2079, 84th in 2080, 85th in 2081, 86th in 2082, 87th in 2083, 88th in 2084, 89th in 2085, 90th in 2086, 91st in 2087, 92nd in 2088, 93rd in 2089, 94th in 2090, 95th in 2091, 96th in 2092, 97th in 2093, 98th in 2094, 99th in 2095, 100th in 2096, 101st in 2097, 102nd in 2098, 103rd in 2099, 104th in 2100, 105th in 2101, 106th in 2102, 107th in 2103, 108th in 2104, 109th in 2105, 110th in 2106, 111th in 2107, 112th in 2108, 113th in 2109, 114th in 2110, 115th in 2111, 116th in 2112, 117th in 2113, 118th in 2114, 119th in 2115, 120th in 2116, 121st in 2117, 122nd in 2118, 123rd in 2119, 124th in 2120, 125th in 2121, 126th in 2122, 127th in 2123, 128th in 2124, 129th in 2125, 130th in 2126, 131st in 2127, 132nd in 2128, 133rd in 2129, 134th in 2130, 135th in 2131, 136th in 2132, 137th in 2133, 138th in 2134, 139th in 2135, 140th in 2136, 141st in 2137, 142nd in 2138, 143rd in 2139, 144th in 2140, 145th in 2141, 146th in 2142, 147th in 2143, 148th in 2144, 149th in 2145, 150th in 2146, 151st in 2147, 152nd in 2148, 153rd in 2149, 154th in 2150, 155th in 2151, 156th in 2152, 157th in 2153, 158th in 2154, 159th in 2155, 160th in 2156, 161st in 2157, 162nd in 2158, 163rd in 2159, 164th in 2160, 165th in 2161, 166th in 2162, 167th in 2163, 168th in 2164, 169th in 2165, 170th in 2166, 171st in 2167, 172nd in 2168, 173rd in 2169, 174th in 2170, 175th in 2171, 176th in 2172, 177th in 2173, 178th in 2174, 179th in 2175, 180th in 2176, 181st in 2177, 182nd in 2178, 183rd in 2179, 184th in 2180, 185th in 2181, 186th in 2182, 187th in 2183, 188th in 2184, 189th in 2185, 190th in 2186, 191st in 2187, 192nd in 2188, 193rd in 2189, 194th in 2190, 195th in 2191, 196th in 2192, 197th in 2193, 198th in 2194, 199th in 2195, 200th in 2196, 201st in 2197, 202nd in 2198, 203rd in 2199, 204th in 2200, 205th in 2201, 206th in 2202, 207th in 2203, 208th in 2204, 209th in 2205, 210th in 2206, 211st in 2207, 212th in 2208, 213th in 2209, 214th in 2210, 215th in 2211, 216th in 2212, 217th in 2213, 218th in 2214, 219th in 2215, 220th in 2216, 221st in 2217, 222nd in 2218, 223rd in 2219, 224th in 2220, 225th in 2221, 226th in 2222, 227th in 2223, 228th in 2224, 229th in 2225, 230th in 2226, 231st in 2227, 232nd in 2228, 233rd in 2229, 234th in 2230, 235th in 2231, 236th in 2232, 237th in 2233, 238th in 2234, 239th in 2235, 240th in 2236, 241st in 2237, 242nd in 2238, 243rd in 2239, 244th in 2240, 245th in 2241, 246th in 2242, 247th in 2243, 248th in 2244, 249th in 2245, 250th in 2246, 251st in 2247, 252nd in 2248, 253rd in 2249, 254th in 2250, 255th in 2251, 256th in 2252, 257th in 2253, 258th in 2254, 259th in 2255, 260th in 2256, 261st in 2257, 262nd in 2258, 263rd in 2259, 264th in 2260, 265th in 2261, 266th in 2262, 267th in 2263, 268th in 2264, 269th in 2265, 270th in 2266, 271st in 2267, 272nd in 2268, 273rd in 2269, 274th in 2270, 275th in 2271, 276th in 2272, 277th in 2273, 278th in 2274, 279th in 2275, 280th in 2276, 281st in 2277, 282nd in 2278, 283rd in 2279, 284th in 2280, 285th in 2281, 286th in 2282, 287th in 2283, 288th in 2284, 289th in 2285, 290th in 2286, 291st in 2287, 292nd in 2288, 293rd in 2289, 294th in 2290, 295th in 2291, 296th in 2292, 297th in 2293, 298th in 2294, 299th in 2295, 300th in 2296, 301st in 2297, 302nd in 2298, 303rd in 2299, 304th in 2300, 305th in 2301, 306th in 2302, 307th in 2303, 308th in 2304, 309th in 2305, 310th in 2306, 311st in 2307, 312th in 2308, 313th in 2309, 314th in 2310, 315th in 2311, 316th in 2312, 317th in 2313, 318th in 2314, 319th in 2315, 320th in 2316, 321st in 2317, 322nd in 2318, 323rd in 2319, 324th in 2320, 325th in 2321, 326th in 2322, 327th in 2323, 328th in 2324, 329th in 2325, 330th in 2326, 331st in 2327, 332nd in 2328, 333rd in 2329, 334th in 2330, 335th in 2331, 336th in 2332, 337th in 2333, 338th in 2334, 339th in 2335, 340th in 2336, 341st in 2337, 342nd in 2338, 343rd in 2339, 344th in 2340, 345th in 2341, 346th in 2342, 347th in 2343, 348th in 2344, 349th in 2345, 350th in 2346, 351st in 2347, 352nd in 2348, 353rd in 2349, 354th in 2350, 355th in 2351, 356th in 2352, 357th in 2353, 358th in 2354, 359th in 2355, 360th in 2356, 361st in 2357, 362nd in 2358, 363rd in 2359, 364th in 2360, 365th in 2361, 366th in 2362, 367th in 2363, 368th in 2364, 369th in 2365, 370th in 2366, 371st in 2367, 372nd in 2368, 373rd in 2369, 374th in 2370, 375th in 2371, 376th in 2372, 377th in 2373, 378th in 2374, 379th in 2375, 380th in 2376, 381st in 2377, 382nd in 2378, 383rd in 2379, 384th in 2380, 385th in 2381, 386th in 2382, 387th in 2383, 388th in 2384, 389th in 2385, 390th in 2386, 391st in 2387, 392nd in 2388, 393rd in 2389, 394th in 2390, 395th in 2391, 396th in 2392, 397th in 2393, 398th in 2394, 399th in 2395, 400th in 2396, 401st in 2397, 402nd in 2398, 403rd in 2399, 404th in 2400, 405th in 2401, 406th in 2402, 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540th in 2536, 541st in 2537, 542nd in 2538, 543rd in 2539, 544th in 2540, 545th in 2541, 546th in 2542, 547th in 2543, 548th in 2544, 549th in 2545, 550th in 2546, 551st in 2547, 552nd in 2548, 553rd in 2549, 554th in 2550, 555th in 2551, 556th in 2552, 557th in 2553, 558th in 2554, 559th in 2555, 560th in 2556, 561st in 2557, 562nd in 2558, 563rd in 2559, 564th in 2560, 565th in 2561, 566th in 2562, 567th in 2563, 568th in 2564, 569th in 2565, 570th in 2566, 571st in 2567, 572nd in 2568, 573rd in 2569, 574th in 2570, 575th in 2571, 576th in 2572, 577th in 2573, 578th in 2574, 579th in 2575, 580th in 2576, 581st in 2577, 582nd in 2578, 583rd in 2579, 584th in 2580, 585th in 2581, 586th in 2582, 587th in 2583, 588th in 2584, 589th in 2585, 590th in 2586, 591st in 2587, 592nd in 2588, 593rd in 2589, 594th in 2590, 595th in 2591, 596th in 2592, 597th in 2593, 598th in 2594, 599th in 2595, 600th in 2596, 601st in 2597, 602nd in 2598, 603rd in 2599, 604th in 2600, 605th in 2601, 606th in 2602, 607th in 2603, 608th in 2604, 609th in 2605, 610th in 2606, 611st in 2607, 612th in 2608, 613th in 2609, 614th in 2610, 615th in 2611, 616th in 2612, 617th in 2613, 618th in 2614, 619th in 2615, 620th in 2616, 621st in 2617, 622nd in 2618, 623rd in 2619, 624th in 2620, 625th in 2621, 626th in 2622, 627th in 2623, 628th in 2624, 629th in 2625, 630

Fifth Test: Rain denies tourists chance to level the series

England overcome by the elements

By Derek Pringle
in Bridgetown

England 403 & 233-3
West Indies 262 & 112-2
Match drawn

ENGLAND'S chances of winning this Test match and levelling the series were dealt a cruel blow by unseasonal rain in Bridgetown yesterday. Although play eventually got under way after lunch, an episode that saw England dismiss both opening batsmen, further rain led to the match being abandoned as a draw after tea.

Although the outcome was desperately disappointing for those looking forward to an exciting, full final day's cricket, the arrival of unexpected rain was entirely in keeping with a series whose sundry twists and turns have made it compulsive viewing.

The El Niño effect attracts the blame for most pesilences and plagues around the globe. Now it seems its departure will be equally vilified, at least by England's cricketers and their supporters, who were no doubt confident of a second successive win, at the previously unconquerable bastion of West Indies cricket, the Kensington Oval.

In fact, the draw was probably favourite, followed by an England win, even before rain had intervened. By the time it had stopped, however, and the mopping up had been completed, only the possibility of 71 overs to bowl out the West Indies was available to England as

play eventually got under way at 1:01pm.

But if the curious timing pleased those who live by such precision, it nonplussed Clayton Lambert, who after a shaky opening over against Phil Tufnell, proceeded to sky a pull off Angus Fraser, and give England the best possible chance of getting something meaningful out of an already abbreviated day.

Lambert, playing only his second Test since his debut against England six and a half years ago, seems to follow a pattern when he bats. A stocky man, he appears to start off by taking on the bowlers with some big shots before tightening up and biding his time. It is a tactic many batsmen use, but with his side third favourites to win here, it was probably ill-advised. Undeterred, however, he tried to launch Fraser's second ball over midwicket. Fortunately for England, it caught the top edge and flew high to wide mid-on, where Dean Headley, no doubt mindful of the sinner he had dropped the

previous day, took a testing catch.

The wicket left Philo Wallace, an even lustier striker than Lambert, caught in two minds. But if he began carefully, he soon opened his shoulders, and he brought up his half-century with a mighty straight six off Tufnell.

Wallace, a riveting and watchable success here on his home ground, has been labelled, by some eminent on-lookers as nothing more than a swifter. It is an unfair assessment and when he needed it, his defensive bat was straight and still. His weakness, and one common to most lusty strikers, is that he plants his front foot down the pitch early in order to get his weight going forward. However, if the ball is not there to hit, as Andy Caddick's nip-backer later proved when it had him lbw, it leaves him with no option but to retract it back into line with the stumps.

It was the first time in the series, the West Indies openers had been successful. But if the break-

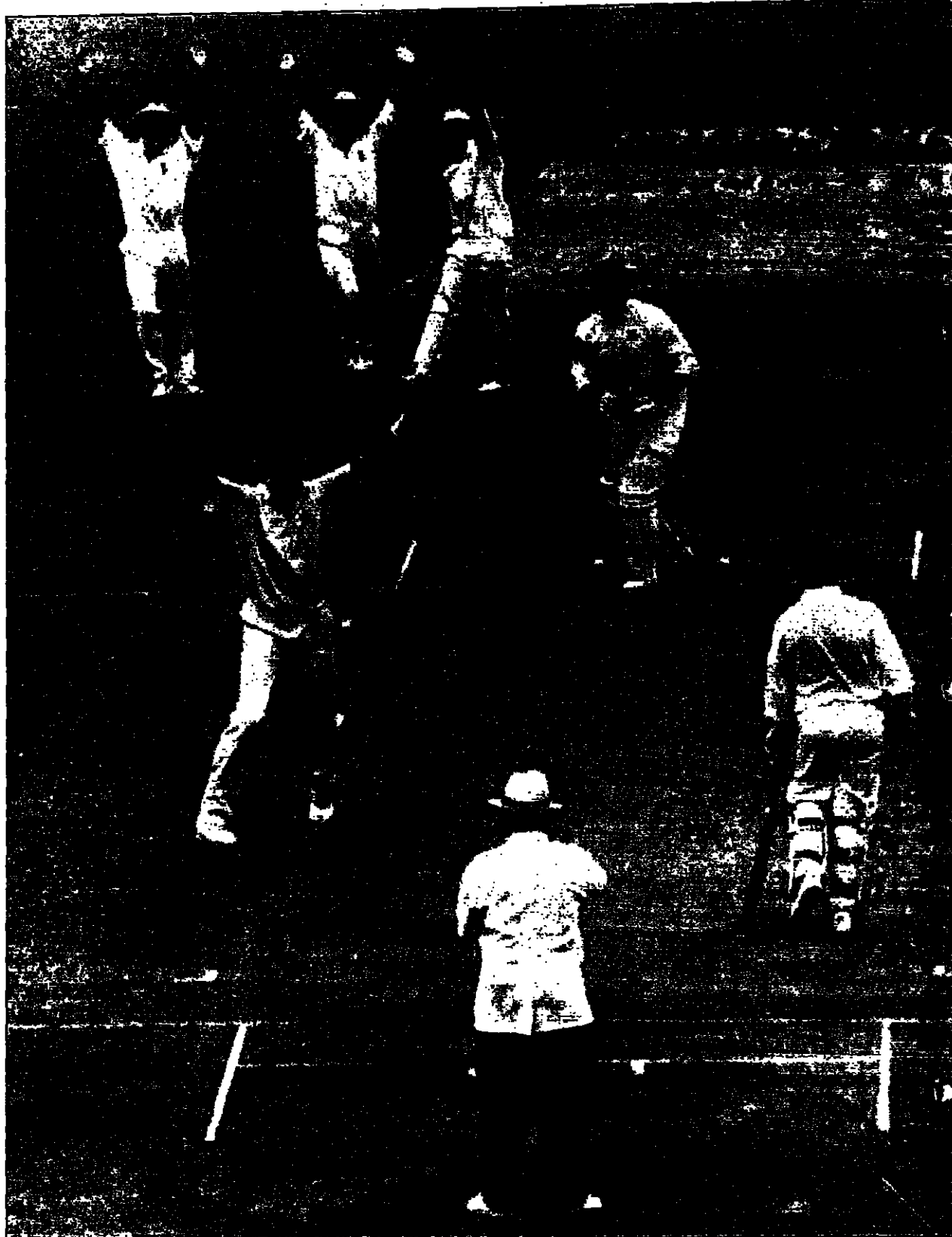
through brought Brian Lara and Shivnarine Chanderpaul, to the crease, any hopes of parting them quickly - Tufnell got a scuttler past Lara's outside edge - were dashed when another bout of rainfall arrived to send the batsmen running for cover.

In some ways it was a bonus that play took place at all and when Atherton and his men turned up at the ground in the morning, the scene that greeted - rain and a ground covered with plastic sheeting - them was more akin to Manchester than an island in the Caribbean.

When he first started at Lancashire, Atherton was a renowned weather spotter who rejoiced in watching rain fall. Yesterday, with a captain's concern, he watched grim faced as ground-staff pattered about mopping up the first significant rain to fall in Barbados since November.

In this hi-tech age of water hogs and underground drainage, the method used to get water off the covers bordered on the farcical. Dressed in fetching yellow anoraks, several groundstaff would soak up the excess with mobile sponge mops before emptying the contents into a lone wheelbarrow, which would then be taken to the boundary edge and emptied. Unsurprisingly with about two acres of covers to mop up, it was a time-consuming process.

With only the most optimistic West Indies supporters claiming that rain was, in fact, saving England, the delays are away precious time, time only West Indies could afford to waste.



England's Andy Caddick traps Philo Wallace leg before in Bridgetown yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Bridgetown scoreboard

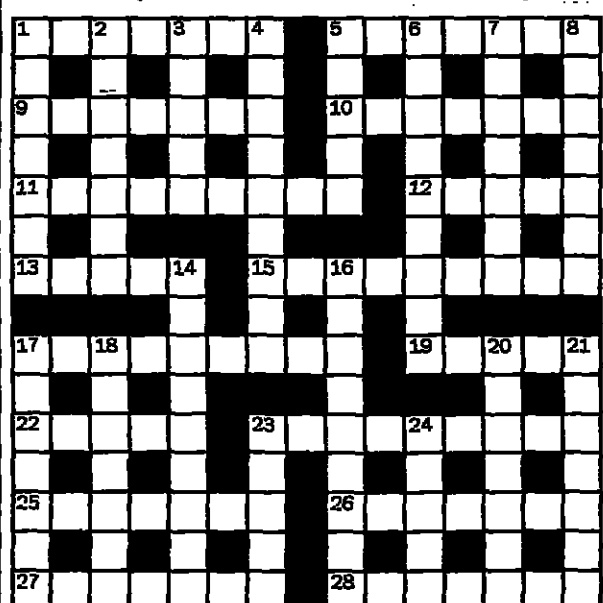
West Indies first innings	262	(100 overs)
England first innings	403	(100 overs)
West Indies second innings	112	(25 overs)
England second innings	233	(50 overs)
West Indies bowlers		
W. H. Edwards	10	(10 overs)
C. G. MacGarry	10	(10 overs)
P. A. Williams	10	(10 overs)
S. H. Murray	10	(10 overs)
England bowlers		
A. Caddick	10	(10 overs)
D. Headley	10	(10 overs)
S. J. Hogg	10	(10 overs)
M. A. Atherton	10	(10 overs)

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3560, Tuesday 17 March

By Andrew

Monday's Solution



PRIVATE APPOINTMENT
CANAL SUBSIDISE
A E O Y U L O S
STRAWGEM OSTIA
S C O M M
ONICE IMPRECISE
T V E N
FLYWEIGHT ATTIC
L S U E R E O
ASSIST BILATERAL
T H R R A U A L
OPERATION MILE
R E S I D E N T I A L
TERENCE EXPIATE

- ACROSS**
- 1 Skilled worker makes a stair new (7)
 - 5 A sphere of liquidity naturally (7)
 - 9 As good as anti? Could be (7)
 - 10 Support one in misdeeds being so? (7)
 - 11 Preoccupation with outside broadcast conference (9)
 - 12 Keeping Los Angeles for Spanish is pivotal (5)
 - 13 In forbidden territory you must have had to do this (5)
 - 15 Flashing lamp on railway going over river is exactly as it should be (9)
 - 17 Clarify advice which smokers could find acceptable (6,3)
 - 19 Something a bit extra about new hair treatment (5)
- DOWN**
- 2 Creature shy about sitting on a horse (5)
 - 3 Sour type has seafood before dessert (4,5)
 - 25 Cooked teas at one will do more than fill (7)
 - 26 Some quite miserable list (7)
 - 27 Suggesting younger type with no idea of time? (7)
 - 28 Feature of uniform alien to English man (7)
 - 1 A hit with poem is fashionable (1,2,4)
 - 2 Flier secures right answer for movement of goods (7)
 - 3 Natural light is filtering up into cavity (5)
 - 4 Hard fruit given minister is not potentially proper food (9)
 - 5 Show condescension in Hamlet, we hear (5)

- 6 Women as a body press for decorative material (9)
- 7 What royalty need is a drink sent up about one (7)
- 8 Alfred comes in to take plunder from horse (7)
- 14 Create due changes in characters? (2,7)
- 16 Space's shape is changing to produce stress (9)
- 17 If such, could be a sort of plant (7)
- 18 Baby needs still to come in fresh (7)
- 20 A time of success in organising Latin for marriage (7)
- 21 Spain allowed to clap people in iron? (7)
- 23 Revolutionary on ship in which mate plays an important role (5)
- 24 Where a fight could take place about name in Alcoholics Anonymous (5)

Lee leaves City with attack on club's managers

Football
By Alan Nixon

FRANCIS LEE's turbulent reign at Manchester City's chairman ended yesterday for "personal, family and business reasons". The millionaire and former City striker, who was swept to power by popular support four years ago, was driven out by spectator discontent as the club sat perilously in the First Division's relegation zone.

He went with a withering swipe at the Maine Road managers who he claimed have wasted millions on poor players and criticised the people inside the club who "have tried to blacken my name".

The 53-year-old Lee resigned as chairman and as a director, leaving his deputy, David Bernstein - a life-long supporter who heads the clothing chain French Connection - in charge. Dennis Hejart, another former City player, becomes director of football, with John Wardle, the boss of JD Sports, joining the board.

Lee paid £3m for a 29.9 per cent stake in City in February 1994. Eight managers and £30m spent on players later, they are facing relegation to the Second Division for the first time in their history - a struggle which still draws 30,000 crowds.

"My family life, personal life and business life have been severely disrupted by events over the past few months to such

an extent that it has become impossible and impractical for me to carry on," Lee said in a statement.

"As a player I took great pride in playing for Manchester City and I was also very proud to have become chairman. Consequently, over the last four years I have tried very hard to create a situation where everyone would be proud, pleased and privileged to be associated with Manchester City.

"I feel I have done my very best for the club. However many improvements are made off the field it is the improvements on it for which the chairman is judged. I leave with my integrity and character intact."

Lee did not single out indi-

vidual managers, but the bulk of signings under his chairmanship were made by Alan Ball and Frank Clark. "We have not bought quality and organised them right. It has not worked for us on the pitch," Lee said. "The purchase of players have not been worth the value we have paid for them, with the odd exception like Georgi Kinkladze."

He denied that he had interfered with team selection. "I have been accused of all kinds of things which are totally untrue," he said. "There are, behind the scenes at Maine Road, some very insincere people, who have tried to blacken my name. There were enemies within and without."

Bernstein, who was brought

into the club by Lee, offered a quick remedy and stressed that the club will have to cut their cloth according to their finances.

"I know the tension that the supporters feel. I feel exactly the same way, absolutely awful," he said. "We will give it everything."

However, he suggested the possibility of standing aside if new money was forthcoming and many observers felt his spell as chairman will be short-lived. Mike McDonald, the Sheffield United chairman, has been pushing for a stake in City for some time.

The position of the manager, Joe Royle, who was appointed in February, appears secure.

Maine line to nowhere page 28

Wright outburst may still lead to court case

POLICE have completed their investigation into an alleged outburst at fans by the Arsenal striker Ian Wright following the club's 3-1 home defeat by Blackburn last December.

Scotland Yard officers, who took a host of statements from supporters following the game at Highbury, could have thrown out the case but they decided to submit a file to the Crown Prosecution Service at the end of last week for advice on whether there is enough evidence for Wright to be charged and forced to undergo a court case, Scotland Yard confirmed yesterday.

The CPS could now take a couple of weeks or even months

to rule on the case yet Wright is likely to know the outcome of their deliberations by the end of the season.

The England striker is alleged to have launched a tirade of abuse at supporters from the window of his team's dressing-room after the game on 13 December.

Blackburn's manager, Roy Hodgson, plans to sign Coventry's Dion Dublin in a £5m deal this week - if Gordon Strachan's men go out of the FA Cup tonight. Hodgson has already

made a move for Dublin and is willing to pay the asking price.

The Manchester United goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel, who tore a hamstring in his side's 1-0 defeat against Arsenal on Saturday, was none the less named as a non-playing member of Denmark's 18-man squad for their friendly against Scotland in Glasgow on 25 March.

The Walsall chairman, Jeff Bonser, has resigned following demonstrations by fans against him at Saturday's game at

Grimsby. Bonser said he would be putting the club up for sale.

Southampton have signed the teenage striker Cosimo Salvi on loan from the Italian Second Division side Torino until the end of the season.

The QPR defender Keith Rowland has withdrawn from the Northern Ireland squad to face Slovakia at Windsor Park on 25 March because his thigh wound will not heal in time.

Wycombe have confirmed Neil Smillie as manager until the

end of the season. Smillie took over as caretaker manager when John Gregory was appointed Aston Villa manager.

Colin Todd, the Bolton manager, signed Swiss striker Gac-tano Giallanza last night to help the club's relegation fight. The under-21 international signed on loan for the rest of the season from the French side Nantes.

Police are studying a video of crowd trouble which marred Cheltenham Town's FA Trophy match with Hayes at the weekend. A hundred fans invaded the pitch after Cheltenham had won the game with the only goal minutes from the end.

Newcastle disunited, page 1

spanish inquisition?

aston villa vs atletico madrid from 7:30pm tonight on

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